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THE SPHERE, 1960
With which are incorporated "BLACK & WHITE" and "GRAPHIC"

The Sphere

Christmas Number

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Christmas Contents

1960

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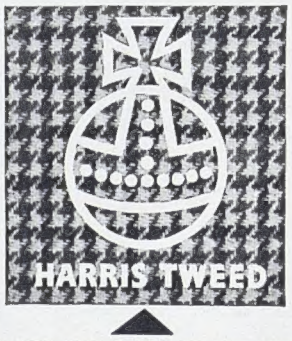

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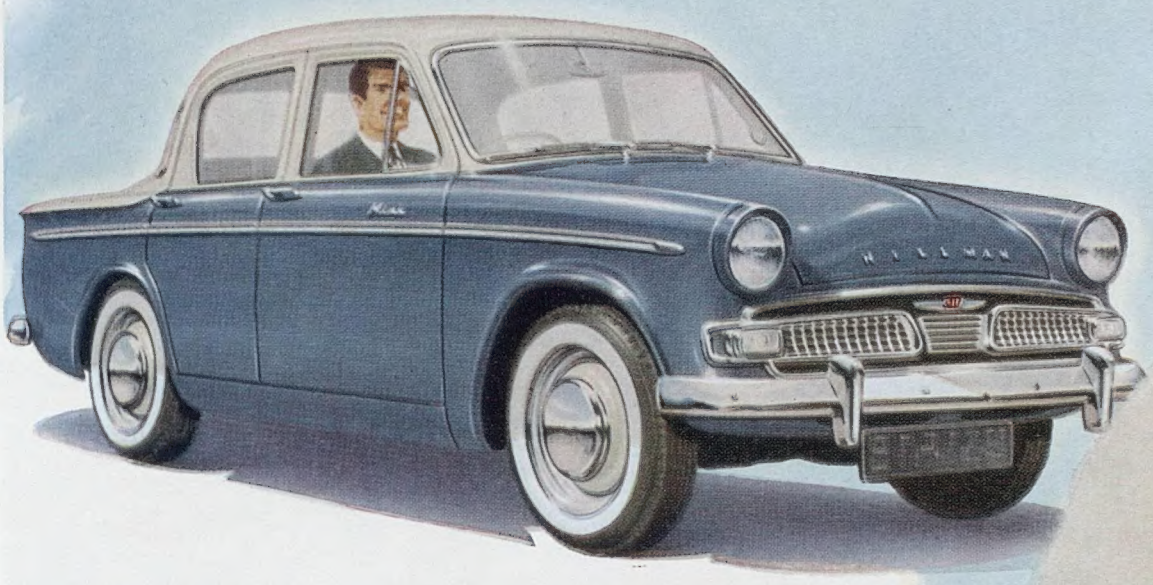

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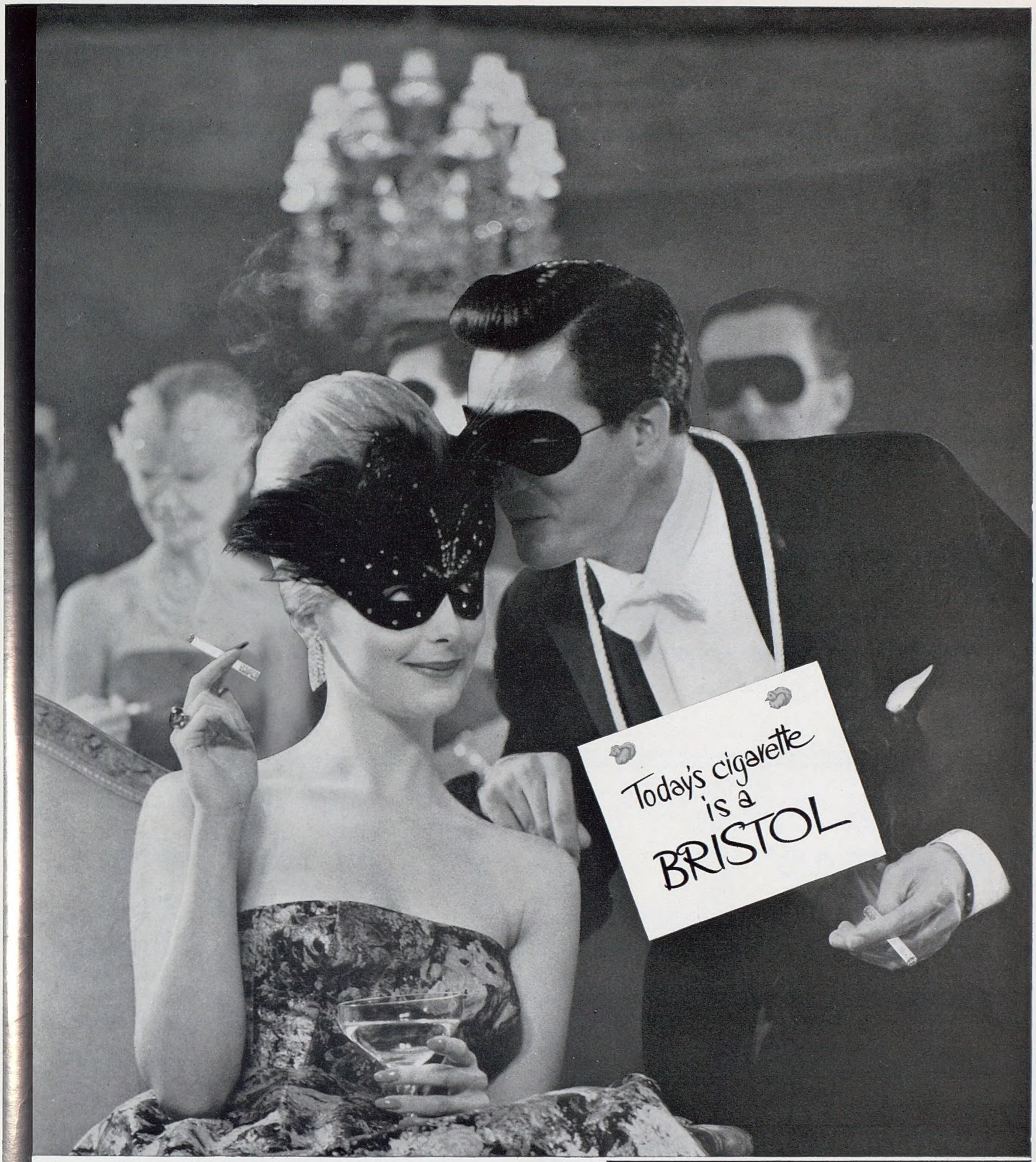

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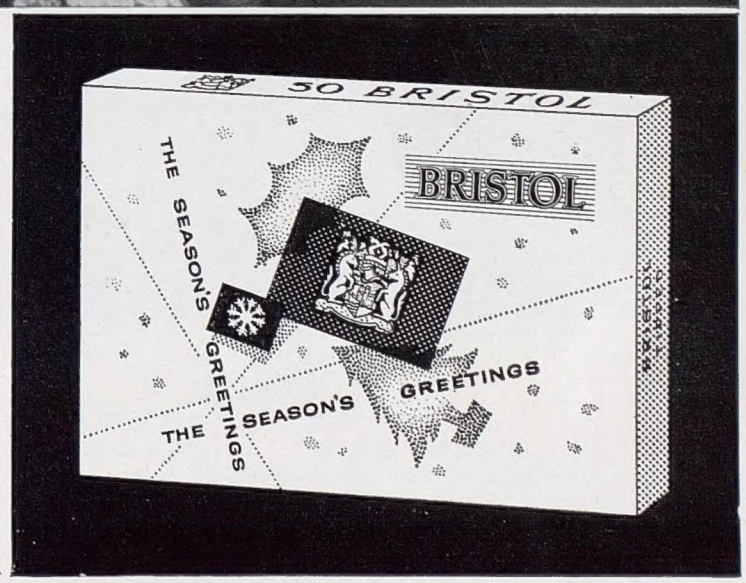

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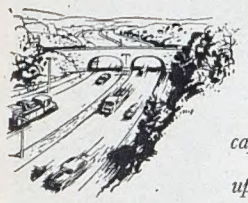

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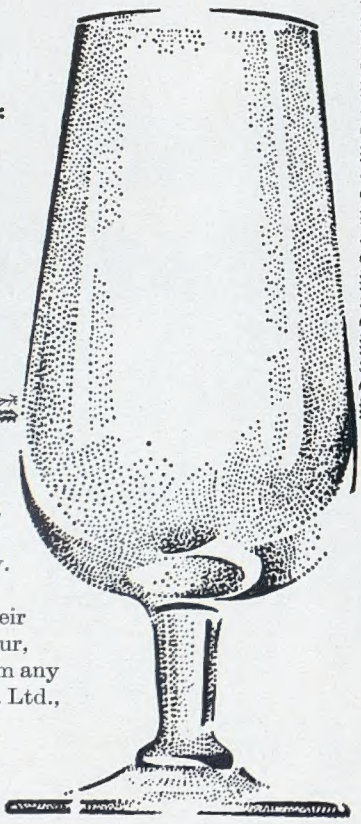

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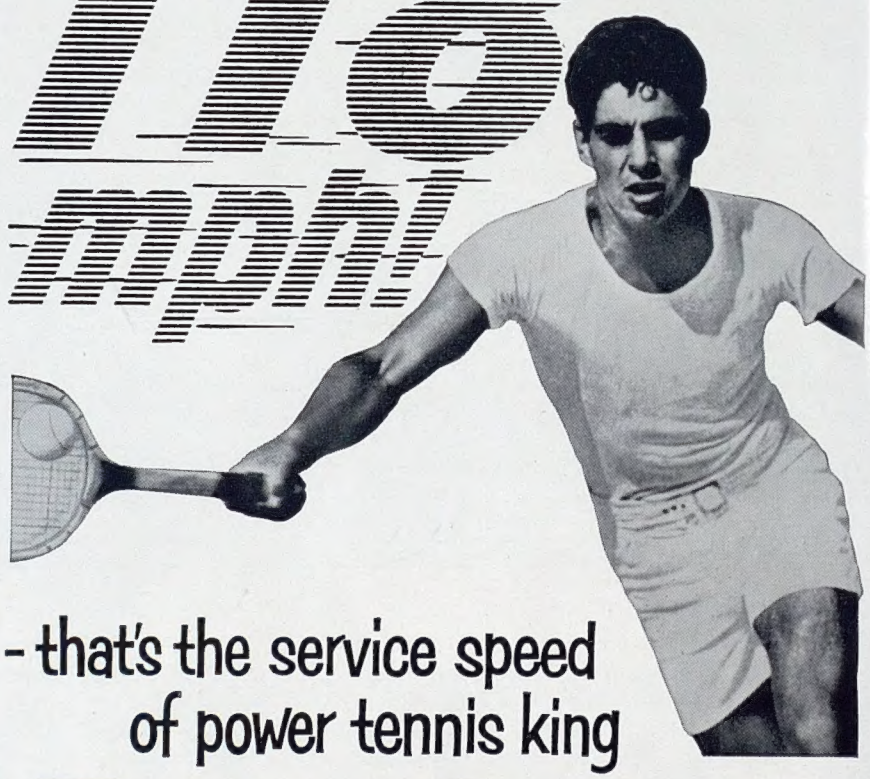

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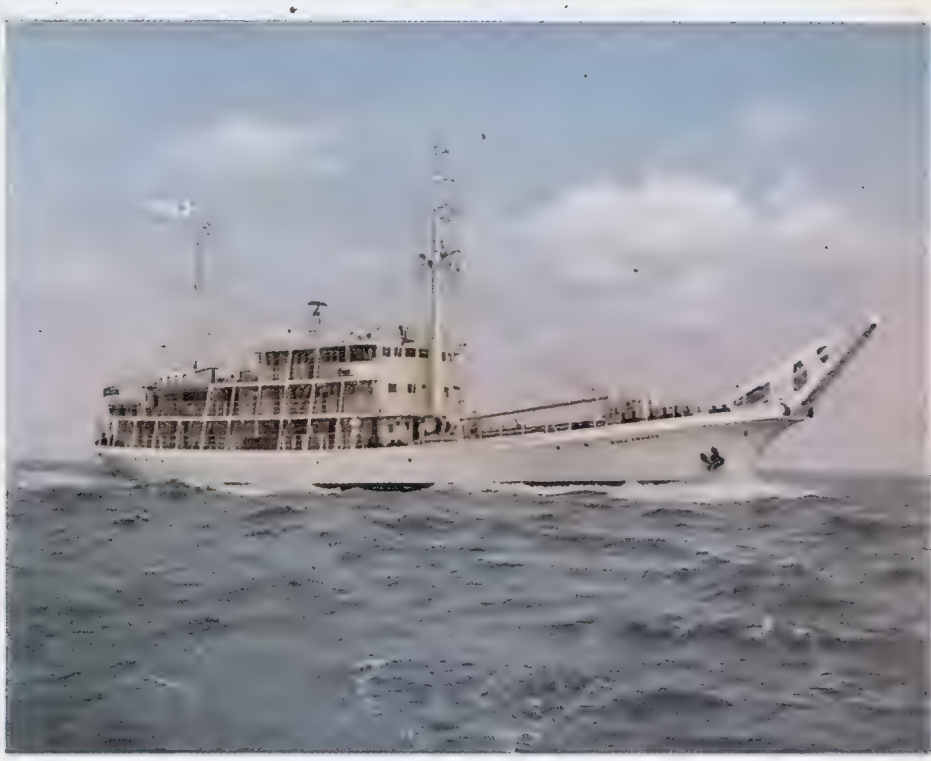

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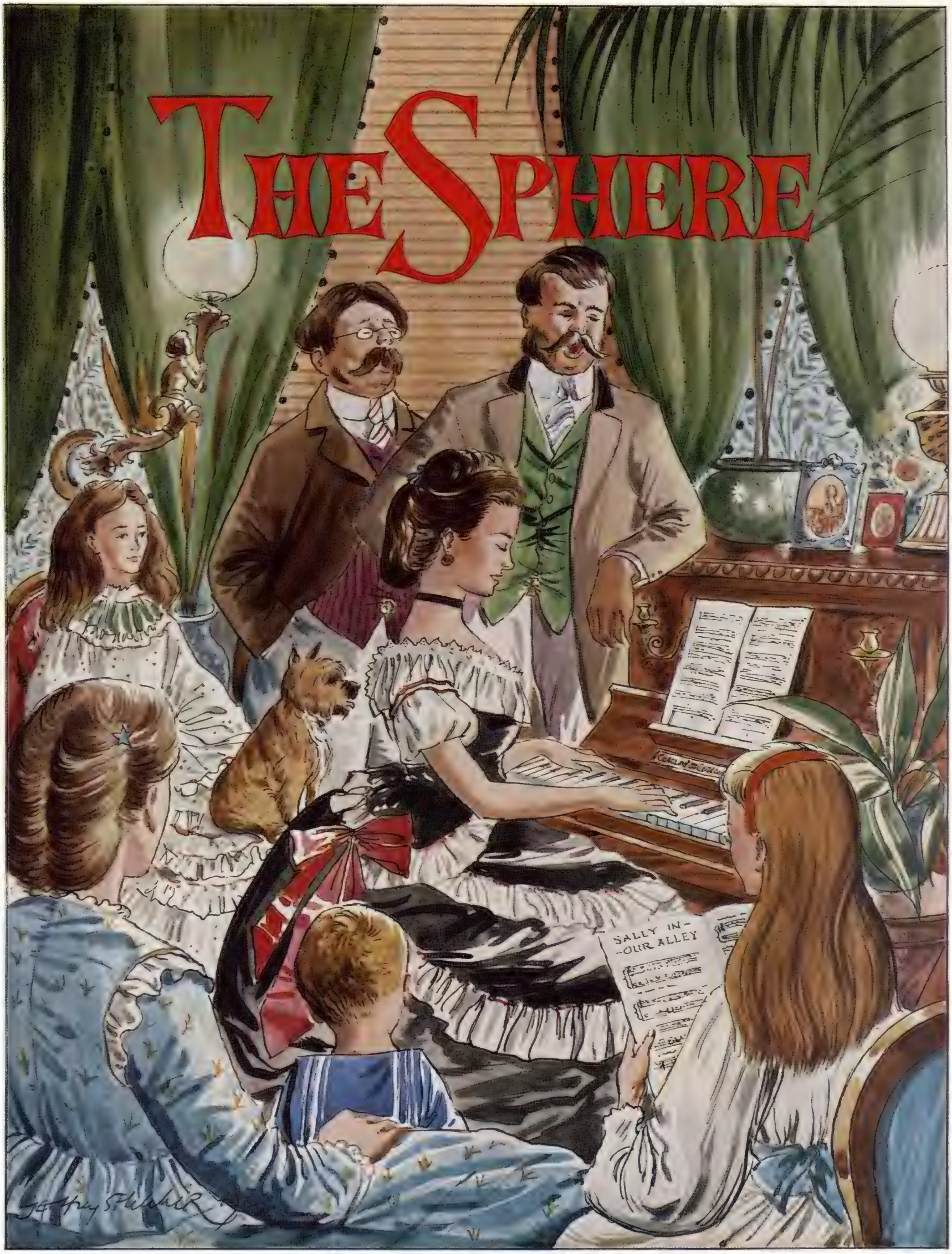

"There's ne'er a lady in the land that's half so sweet as Sally" . . . Male and female voices combine in the enjoyment of a typical evening in a middle-class household in late Victorian times. The eldest daughter is at the piano; her sister sitting by the aspidistra sings the melody of "Sally in Our Alley" in shrill, immature soprano. Her other sister, with the Cairn terrier on her knees, is content to listen. Mama is certainly joining in and the son in the sailor suit leaning against her will have this scene registered in his memory for life. Papa, with his elbow on the piano, provides a fruity baritone. Behind him is Uncle Fred, who fancies himself as a tenor and is a keen punster and perpetrator of practical jokes. If informed about the wonders which the future holds in the form of radio and television, they would all, including the dog, agree the prospect to be very boring.

AT HOME IN THE 1880s

Painted by Geoffrey S. Fletcher

BALLADS OF LONDON

Up and down the City Road,
In and Out the Eagle,
This is the way the money goes,
Pop goes the weasel.

There was a youth, a well-beloved youth,
And he was a Squire's Son
And he loved the bailiff's daughter dear
Who lived in Islington.

She was beautiful as a butterfly
And as proud as a Queen,
Pretty Polly Perkins
of Paddington Green.

Water-colours by
Geoffrey S. Fletcher

Of all the girls that are so smart
There's none like pretty Sally;
She is the darling of my heart;
And she lives in our alley.

See, where lovely Hampstead stands
And the wond'ring vale commands.
What surprising prospects rising
All around adorn ye lands.

London abounds in buildings and districts which have associations with old songs and ballads. Some areas today may not have the same appearance as they did when a particular ballad was first fashionable. For instance, the Eagle Tavern, on the corner of the City Road and Shepherdess Walk, is a late Victorian structure. The jingle "Half a Pound of Twopenny Rice" was probably coined in the 1830s and was concerned with the tailors who frequented the earlier Eagle on the same site. There can be little doubt that the Squire's son in Islington courted the Bailiff's daughter in the shadow of Canonbury Tower, which has survived from the sixteenth century and now stands behind an early eighteenth century house. Paddington Green, though it is now a public park, must look much the same as it did when Polly Perkins was faithless to her lover. The aspect of another London Green, Clerkenwell, may have changed. St. James's Church, which overlooks it, was not built until 1788. But one can still recapture the atmosphere in which Henry Carey, poet and musician, observed there, around 1715, an apprentice and his girl, and was inspired to write "Sally in Our Alley." There are parts of Hampstead Heath which have altered little since the famous eighteenth century ballad lauded it. Purists may question whether St. Clement Danes in the Strand is in fact the Oranges and Lemons Church of the nursery rhyme. For the general public, however, there is no dispute about it.

Oranges and lemons,
Say the bells of St. Clements,
Brickbats and tiles,
Say the bells of St. Giles.

Trompe l'oeil II by Martin Battersby

TROMPE L'OEIL

Three Fine Examples of the Art from the Exhibition held at the Arthur Jeffress Gallery in May

Trompe l'oeil with arbutus by Roy Hobdell

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"In a hostel—your first Christmas in this country!.... I won't hear of it. You must spend it with me!"

TALKING TURKEY

A Christmas short story by Marie Muir

Illustrated by Lucien Lowen

"In a hostel—your first Christmas in this country!" exclaimed Mrs. Hampshire, nervously tapping her cigarette. "I won't hear of it. You must spend it with me!"

"All of you," she added, as the faces round her at the table, four dark and one white, turned to each other for guidance. "Besides, it 'll be a kindness to me, you know!"

They all looked back at her. Five charming young people. Not *too* young, these overseas post-graduates, and more poised than the local student-body, some of whom were making an uproar at the end of the room, though most, she suspected, were at home watching the "telly" instead of welcoming the strangers. But if that was why Professor Peters' wife had asked her to come and help to-night, then their loss was her gain. At last, after years of a dreadfully useless life, apart from some social work of the most impersonal kind, she was on the threshold of something important....

"It 's very nice of you," a pretty West Indian girl said shyly. "Terribly kind. But I couldn't leave my friend. She 's over there—"

"Then bring her." Mrs. Hampshire glanced over her shoulder, but it was impossible to make out anyone in the crowd milling round the gramophone: "I 'd like you all to bring someone. My flat 's quite big enough—too big for me alone—and we can have a real Christmas dinner. Do introduce us. And what about you, Mr. Fowokan? Is there anyone *you 'd* like to bring?"

He was the tallest and blackest, and wore his native cloth slung splendidly round him—that was why she had remembered his name He replied in a deep, cultured voice:

"Thank you. We shall come with pleasure. I 'd like to see an English Christmas."

Mrs. Hampshire thanked her stars that she had refrained from the *clichés* about the weather and climatic differences she could hear going on at the other tables, and of which she was sure they must be heartily sick. Smiling, while she wished she had supplied herself with a mnemonic for the names of the others, particularly the middle-European, a young man whose hair was already receding from an immense forehead, she declared:

"And so should I! That 's to say, Christmas at home, not in a hotel somewhere, where I usually hide myself. You can't imagine how I shall enjoy cooking for a family. We 'll have turkey and plum-pudding and mince-pies—and plenty of fruit, of course, in case—now, let me give you each one of my cards. And will you all scribble your names on this one?"

Scribble was the word. She was not much the wiser after the card had gone round the table and come back, bent and scrawled-over. But she did make out that the West Indian girl, who had gone to fetch her friend, was called Mira Something.

"This is Beulah Bose, Mrs. Hampshire," she was saying now, introducing a slim girl in a Shetland cardigan.

"Beulah, you 'll come to my Christmas party, won't you?"

"Why, I 'd like to, Mrs. Hampshire. But we don't know the way——"

"Oh, it 's very easily found—quite central!" Mrs. Hampshire's voice shook as she explained, and her eyes shone. Normally a controlled person, she was trembling when she rose—careful as always not to outstay her welcome: "I 'll expect you all on the twenty-fifth. It 's a Sunday. But, of course, we can't mistake Christmas Day. One o'clock—or would you prefer the evening?"

"I should myself like one o'clock," said the young man with the bulging forehead, whose name had run right off the card. Spokesman for the rest, he sprang up and brought his heels together: "Thank you."

"But I 'm going to thank *you*," Mrs. Hampshire insisted. "All of you. I shall look forward to it *tremendously*. You 'll telephone, won't you, if you 'd like to bring friends . . ."

(*Continued on following pages*)

f

TALKING TURKEY

(*Continued from previous page*)

They all promised. The magnificent Nigerian and a slender, laughing, lighter-coloured Somali escorted her to the door. Mrs. Peters, pouring coffee in the hall, could not help her out with their names, but in the cloakroom she deciphered the signatures of two Fowokans on the card. So the tall, ebony young woman in the dark suit, who had smiled gravely throughout but scarcely spoken, must be related. Wife . . . sister? . . . it would all come out on Christmas Day. Not for years, since she began to live alone, had she felt so caught up in the surge of modern life as when she stepped out into the wintry street.

How thankful she was that she had not yielded to the temptation that often assailed her, to give up the pointless trouble of housekeeping and the nuisance of neighbours and live in a hotel. From to-night onwards, her big, quiet rooms would be a godsend to anyone wanting to meet for coffee and a chat in surroundings less institutional than to-night. Or one of the girls, or the young men, even—she was old enough to be their mother, anyway—might want a haven in which to study in peace.

She stumbled, familiar tension stiffening in her at the recollection of the children upstairs. But only for a moment. Instead of the token box of sweets she had delivered to them by the grocer every Christmas, to keep up the fiction of a neighbourliness that simply didn't exist, she would send them the biggest and gaudiest jigsaw puzzle she could buy. Perhaps it would keep them quiet over Christmas—at any rate, it was worth trying, and for the moment she had more important things to think about. It was so long since she had cooked a full-scale meal that she must start making lists as soon as she got home. . . .

Quailing just a little at the magnitude of her task, she walked on briskly, comforted by the reflection that nowadays the turkey could be bought all ready, swathed in polythene. The plum-pudding, brandy-butter and mince-pies she would make herself, and there should be almonds and raisins and chocolates and every kind of fruit, candied and fresh. A casserole of boiled rice, kept handy, might be a good idea, though they had really all seemed completely cosmopolitan . . . as different from the people upstairs as though the latter were fresh from the jungle. . . .

They were arriving home from somewhere unspecified when she reached the entrance to the flats. Late though it was, Daphne and George were with them. George, drooping limply against his father's shoulder, was only three, and Daphne—well, Mrs. Hampshire disliked her so much for the sticky marks she left on the walls and the fine old banister-rail that she thought of her as a menace rather than a child. Their father, a lanky young man in a shabby jacket, had some pretensions to breeding in his voice, but her mother wore the uniform of tartan slacks and ragged hairstyle affected by all the young women in the district, where the big old houses were all sub-divided now.

Mrs. Hampshire's spirits dived. As usual, she greeted them quietly, and they exchanged tight smiles. Then Daphne flung her a defiant look, and pushing past, rushed on ahead, pounding on the stairs till every nerve in Mrs. Hampshire's body quivered.

Sometimes, after such an encounter and their unspoken hostility, she lay awake all night beneath them. But this time, armoured in her new usefulness, she felt satisfaction flow round her as she let herself into her own flat and closed the door.

It was gracious and charming. Already she could see it in imagination on Christmas Day, with all those interesting faces round her big table, and the firelight flickering on her most cherished china, silver and glass. Catching sight of herself in the Florentine mirror in the hall, she saw with delight that she looked almost young as she stood dreaming instead of taking off her hat.

Joe Reed came marchi

Molly Reed stared, fascinated, at the huge, pale carcase held supplicatingly before her

Never had Daphne and George made such an uproar overhead as in the succeeding few days. Mrs. Hampshire tried hard to tell herself she knew what it was like to be a child at Christmas, but wished desperately that they had solid earth below them instead of her shrinking self.

There were shrieks and small bodies thudding against doors whenever the postman came, screams when their father returned from work, footsteps, inevitably growing louder and heavier, rushing up and down the stairs. And, of course, paper. There was always a sweet-wrapping or a bit of crepe or tinsel torn off after a visit to Santa and discarded in the lobby, or outside the gate. Mrs. Hampshire, returning with her own purchases and growing ever more anxious and anticipatory, meticulously scavenged until her patience broke.

That was on Christmas Eve. The day before, she had paid her " help " overtime to wipe down and polish the staircase wall and banisters. Only the fact that she was carrying some holly and mistletoe restrained her from violence when, returning from her final shopping-trip, she found Daphne chalking pictures on the paintwork.

" *Don't*——" she cried, checking herself swiftly to : " Please don't do that, Daphne. You wouldn't like me to come up and

into the dining-room with the turkey, and the meal began

draw on *your* stairs, would you?"

Daphne glared, breathed heavily, and said nothing. Only then did Mrs. Hampshire notice the child's mother coming down with George holding her hand. Pale, they looked at each other, but all young Mrs. Reed said as she scooped the little boy up under her arm and hurried past was:

"Sorry. You know you mustn't do that, Daph. I'll wipe it off when we get back."

Mrs. Hampshire was tired and over-anxious. True, the season was one of goodwill, and no one had ever been more full of it than she, but this seemed the last straw. Trembling with anger, she washed off the chalk-marks herself, hoping it would be taken for the reproof she intended.

A boy was delivering her turkey when the family filed up on their way back, so she did not see the effect, but it did seem as though things were quieter overhead afterwards. She was able to relax and listen to a carol service before going to bed in the assurance that the potatoes were peeled, the vegetables cleaned and the turkey ready-stuffed inside its transparent wrappings. It looked enormous. . . .

It was. When she tried to coax it into the oven next morning, it refused. Aghast, she realised that the one thing she had failed to take into account was the bijou size of her cooker. She so seldom used the oven, preferring grills, that it had never occurred to her to estimate its capacity.

Panting and struggling, she tried the huge bird from every angle, but it just would not go. Forced to give up, she cast about in her mind for some shop that might be open on Christmas Day, selling red-hot turkeys, and finally, near hysteria, remembered the delivery boy last night had handed Mrs. Reed a small chicken *en passant*. A glance at the clock drove her to such a pitch of frenzy that, grasping the tin with both hands, she let herself out on the landing, staggered upstairs and rang the bell.

Mrs. Reed opened the door, revealing a scatter of gay wrapping-paper, cardboard boxes and toys, from which George and Daphne emerged to stare in blank amazement.

"Is something wrong?" the young woman stammered, backing away. "I know we've been making rather a noise, but——"

"I can't get it in the oven. I—oh, do forgive me, but I wondered if you'd let *me* cook your chicken, while you cook this for me."

Molly Reed stared, fascinated, at the huge, pale carcase held supplicatingly before her.

"A whole turkey!" she said, bewildered, her hands going out just in time to grab and save it from sliding off the tin.

"I'll pay for the extra gas, of course. Oh, please don't imagine that I—you see, I'm just simply *desperate*!"

Mrs. Reed's teeth caught at her lower lip. Then:

"Come in. The gas doesn't matter, of course." she said, and, stepping back, called over her shoulder: "Joe, switch the oven to Full, and bring Mrs. Hampshire some coffee."

"Oh no, thank you—I really haven't time. You see, I have six young people coming for Christmas dinner——"

"Why, that's lovely!" the girl exclaimed, relieved. Convinced up to now that their aloof neighbour had gone mad, she broke into smiles as she ushered her and the turkey into a chaotic kitchen. "You're lucky—Joe's mother's ill, and it's the first year we haven't had a family party. We've been running to and fro to the hospital so much, it doesn't seem like Christmas at all."

It looked almost too much like it to the relieved Mrs. Hampshire, thankfully watching the oven door close on the corpse as Joe Reed handed her a steaming cup. She had never seen such a litter in her life —even the Christmas tree in the living-room window was cockeyed. But the coffee was lifegiving . . . and now she had time to look at them, she saw the young couple had a pale and harassed air.

"I'm so sorry about your mother," she said sincerely.

Joe gave her a quick, one-sided smile:

"We think she'll pull through. But Molly's had a tough time of it, and it's hard on the children—no proper Christmas."

"Give me your chicken. I'll roast it, and if there's anything else I can do——"

"It's barbecued. I'm only going to have time to heat it up," Molly confessed. "And this was to be George's first *real* Christmas. He was too small last year——"

Her voice quivered. The tapered pants and urchin hair seemed suddenly pathetic, even when she pulled herself together to add briskly:

(*Concluded on following page*)

TALKING TURKEY

(*Continued from previous page*)

" Anyway, don't you worry. We shan't need the oven till later. But would you mind just popping up to do your own basting? We said we 'd take the children to see their grannie this morning. But I hope we 'll be back in time to carry it down for you."

" We will. Don't risk it yourself," urged Joe. "——These visitors, are they relations? "

" No. They 're rather special——" Mrs. Hampshire found to her surprise that she had forgotten them during the last few minutes. Putting down her cup, she explained, and the Reeds' half-worried, half-amused faces grew serious and respectful.

" But that 's wonderful," said Molly, going with her to the door. " It 's terrific! Here 's the key. I 'll try to keep the children quiet this afternoon, but—you know how one hears every sound on these stairs—you won't mind if they look out of the window when your friends go, will you? "

The seed of an idea took root in Mrs. Hampshire's mind. Each time she laboured upstairs to baste the turkey it grew a little more, till finally she could stand the sight of the Reeds' minute chicken no longer. Rushing down to her own flat, she pulled out the last leaf of the table and set four more places, one with a mat of transparent plastic for little George. The thought of Daphne's sticky fingers on her shining mahogany made her swallow, but she found she couldn't submit her to indignity.

" I 've added your potatoes and sprouts to mine," she announced, stepping out boldly when she heard them coming back. " I want you all to join my party. No—please don't refuse. Can you be ready in ten minutes? "

The international guests were late. Molly Reed, changed into an attractive yellow dress with one of her own aprons over it, was in the gleaming little kitchen helping to dish up, and Joe was in position between the children and the drinks table when the bell rang at last and six pairs of feet and six nervously lowered voices sounded on the stairs.

There was an anxious moment for Mrs. Hampshire, who was beginning to wonder if, after all, they would mix; a slight disappointment when Mr. Fowokan proved to be wearing a lounge suit; a qualm lest the sudden apparition of five dark faces frighten little George . . . and then, in no time, everyone was introduced and wishing each other a happy Christmas, sherry was drunk, Joe Reed disappeared discreetly to come marching into the dining-room with the turkey, and the meal began.

" This gentleman, he is your son? " Bulging Forehead asked *sotto voce*, and Mrs. Hampshire felt a pang. A wish that, only yesterday, would have convinced her she was senile. . . .

Absurd, of course. But still it was comforting to reflect that when her other guests dispersed to their various corners of the earth, the Reeds would still be right above her head. And meantime, her party was twice the success she had expected. Flushed and delighted, she beamed even upon Daphne, who was forgetting her table-manners as her eyes, like blue saucers, travelled from face to face.

As for George, when coffee was over in the drawing-room, he was passed from Mr. Fowokan to Mrs. Fowokan and back again until his chuckles subsided and he nodded off to sleep, fair head tucked under the African woman's chin. Molly and the two girls talked clothes together on the couch, and Joe, to Mrs. Hampshire's surprise and contrition, revealed undreamed-of academic qualities. His quick, nervous tones, Bulging Forehead's precise ones and the deep, rich voices of the others discussing matters far above her head almost sang her to sleep after her exertions.

She was so tired, and beginning to feel so humble, that she was not really sorry when the guests said they must go. Satisfaction pervaded her, but not quite the kind she had expected, though she had no regrets. . . .

" Oh dear, he 's wet," Molly Reed exclaimed, as she gathered the sleeping George into her arms. " Oh, I *am* sorry, Mrs. Er——. Your beautiful suit——"

"She's nice," Molly said . . . . "I wish we didn't have to go. This lovely room!"

Mrs. Fowokan brushed the damp patch on her suit, and smiled, but her eyes were full of tears.

" It doesn't matter. I have two children, too," she confided. " Just the same age as yours."

" Have you? " Molly clasped George close. " How could you leave them behind, both of you? "

" We just had to. There 's such a need in our country for education, you see."

" Oh-ho— " Molly blinked and swallowed, trying to return the smile. " Who 's looking after them for you? "

" My mother," Mrs. Fowokan said simply, shaking hands.

They all filed out, to a great winding of scarves and struggling into overcoats in the hall. Left together in the drawing-room, the Reeds looked at each other in a sort of wonder.

" She 's nice," Molly said on a catching breath. " I wish we didn't have to go. This lovely room."

" Some day we 'll have one, too, darling. Sit down—you can rest a bit longer. Daph, leave those ornaments alone, and come and help Daddy wash up."

" Oh, no! " protested Mrs. Hampshire, coming back to the sounds of departure on the stairs, but he insisted:

" Daphne and I are experts. We 'll wash and dry, you put away. That is, if you don't mind? "

" *Mind*! " exclaimed Mrs. Hampshire, and in spite of exhaustion and imminent risk to her best china walked on air to the kitchen, holding Daphne's hand.

Relaxing into the sofa cushions with a luxurious sigh, Molly eased little George down beside her. In the street below, the knot of visitors glanced up at the lighted window and laughed sheepishly.

" It wasn't too bad, after all," said Beulah Bose. " I feel kind of mean, the things I said about you letting me in for it."

" Me, too," agreed Mira. Bulging Forehead nodded:

" He has a good brain, that man—the relation. His wife is charming. Why did we think there would be no one there but a lonely old lady? "

" She 's not so old," defended Beulah and Mira in unison. " She 's sweet—and she gave us a wonderful meal."

The Fowokans exchanged long, wistful looks, saying nothing. Hamid, the Somali, an irrepressible young man, giggled.

" Come on," he said, hunching his duffel coat about him and starting down the street. " We 're still on time for the party in the Club. Another Merry Christmas! "

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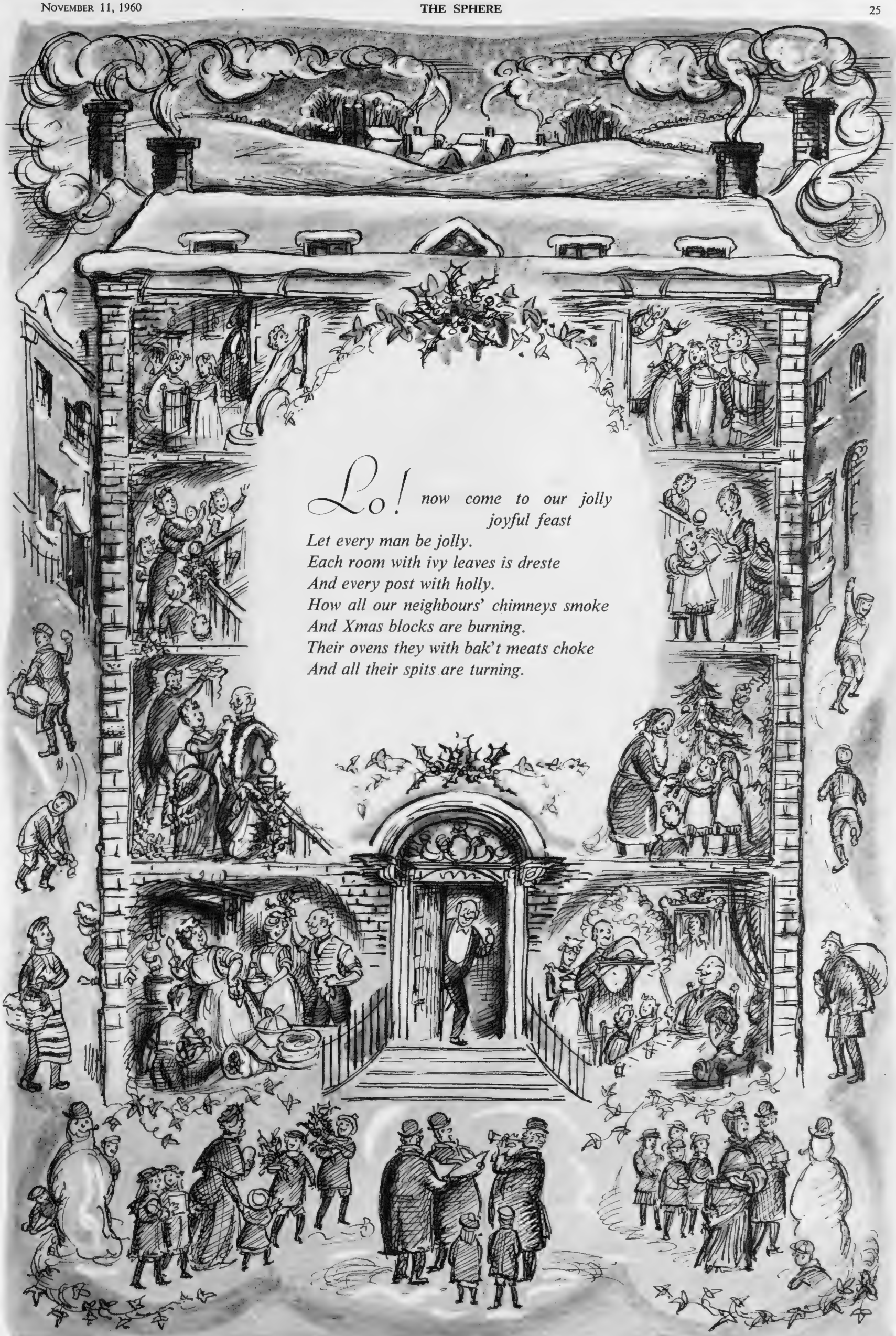


Lo! now come to our jolly joyful feast
Let every man be jolly.
Each room with ivy leaves is dreste
And every post with holly.
How all our neighbours' chimneys smoke
And Xmas blocks are burning.
Their ovens they with bak't meats choke
And all their spits are turning.

Above and Below Stairs

A Victorian Christmas Scene by J. S. Goodall

A powerful light shines out on a snow-covered Oast house at Chiddingstone Causeway

WINTER IN KENT

On a Kentish farm in the deep mid-winter

Looking across the fifteenth-century bridge over the river Darent in the village of Eynsford

A cold winter night in the snow-covered village of Birling

The encampment in Hyde Park, 1780

AQUATINTS

by

Paul Sandby

Often called the "father of English water colour painting" Paul Sandby was born in Nottingham in 1725, but spent much of his working life in London. He was by training an official draughtsman, starting his career in the military drawing department at the Tower and ending it as chief drawing master of the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich. His fame as an artist rests on his water colours and gouache paintings, particularly of landscapes. Up to his time a water colour was predominantly regarded as an intermediate stage in producing an engraved plate, but Sandby was concerned with a number of societies which fostered an interest in water colours in their own right. Sandby was also a pioneer in the field of aquatints: his patron, Charles Greville, purchased the secret of the process from a French artist. A selection of Paul Sandby's work was on show in this year's Guildhall Gallery's summer show in London.

Both pictures are reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum

The encampment in St. James's Park, 1780

King Stephen is crowned in Westminster Abbey at Christmastide, in 1135

CHRISTMAS AT COURT

A survey through the centuries since the days of the Normans

Paintings by
William McLaren

CHRISTMAS in past centuries was often an occasion when monarchs displayed their power and wealth. Under the Normans it was a time for Coronations. William the Conqueror was crowned in Westminster Abbey on Christmas Day 1066 and in 1135 Stephen's Coronation took place on St. Stephen's Day (December 26). The latter's reign was an unhappy period of civil strife, Stephen's title to the throne being disputed by Matilda, daughter of Henry I.

The first Plantagenet, Henry II, carried on the custom of Christmas Coronations, when he was crowned in 1154. He also appears to have captured something of the true spirit of Christmas in the banquets and tournaments which he held at his Court. Many of his successors outvied each other in the splendour of their Christmas entertainments. During the festivities in 1346, Edward III founded the Order of the Garter. Mr. Michael Harrison, in his *The Story of Christmas*, published by Odham's Press in 1951 and the sourcebook of much valuable information about the season, holds the opinion that the popular story about the institution of the Order is true. The Countess of Huntingdon did lose her garter and the knight who picked it up and sniggeringly displayed it was rebuked by the King with the words, "*Honi Soit qui mal y pense.*"

One of the most sumptuous Christmasses on record occurred in the reign of Richard II, who kept his court in magnificent style. In 1389 he held a tournament at Smithfield in London. Some sixty knights were led on to the field by silver chains held by a like number of ladies who later retired to the gaily decorated pavilions to watch the jousting. The knights met in combat with a host of foreign knights.

Henry IV, who ousted Richard from the throne, entertained the Emperor of Byzantium at Eltham Palace for Christmas 1400. Henry V was far from being the chivalrous figure created by Shakespeare and his Christmasses were often times of violence. However, on at least one occasion during his wars in France he offered a truce to besieged French forces over the days of the Feast. Generally speaking, in the Middle Ages Christmas was observed in splendid style at Court. The spectacles provided were probably intended as reminders of where the real power in the land resided.

continued on following pages)

Christmas, 1389. The splendid tournament at Smithfield, decreed by Richard II

A Christmas Pageant at the Court of Henry VIII which took place at the Palace of Richmond in 1516

CHRISTMAS AT COURT

GRADUALLY, as the centuries wore on, pageants and masques found increasing favour over the protracted tournaments of the earlier reigns, although there were tournaments still being held as late as the reign of James I.

Late in 1515, Francesco Chiercati arrived in England as Papal Nuncio and he wrote numerous accounts of life in England to the Duchess of Mantua, Isabella d'Este, never ceasing in his amazement and lavish praise at the high degree of culture and civilisation which he found in this then remote land. At Christmas time 1516 a marvellous pageant which Chiercati probably witnessed was devised for the King in the great hall at Richmond Palace. A chronicler of the time has left us this account.

"Against the twelfe day, or the day of Epiphanie, at night, before the banquet in the hall at Richmond, was a pageant devised like a mounteine and set with stones; on top of which mounteine was a tree of Gold, the branches and boughs frised with gold, spreading on everie side over the mounteine, with roses and pomegranates, the which mounteine was, with vices, brought up towards the King, and out of the same came a ladie apparelled in cloth of gold, and the children of honour called henchmen,

which were freshly disguised, and danced a morice before the King: and that done, re-entered the mounteine, which was then drawn back, and then was the wassail or banquet brought in, and so brake up Christmasse."

Chiercati wrote to the renowned Duchess later in the year, ". . . to sum up, most illustrious Madama, here in England we find all the wealth and delights in the world. Those who call the English barbarians are themselves barbarians! Here we see magnificent costumes, rare virtues, and the finest courtesy. And best of all we have this invincible King, who is endowed with so many excellent virtues that he seems to me to surpass all others who wear a crown in these times. Blessed and happy is the country which is ruled by so worthy and excellent a prince. I would rather live under his mild and gentle sway than enjoy the greatest freedom under any other form of government."

One wonders how many at the Court would have agreed with him. It was an age of greed for power, the game being played without mercy and none being expected. Still, there must have been many who were content to await with eagerness the next lavish spectacle which Henry VIII, in his love of Christmas, was to put on throughout his reign.

There are numerous descriptions of Christmas in the days of Henry's most distinguished child, Elizabeth I. Certain customs were condemned by the Reformers as being "Papist." But it was also the age when the English Reformation was giving way to the English Renaissance. It was for the Christmas season that Shakespeare wrote *Twelfth Night*.

(*continued on following page*

A tournament at Christmas during the reign of James I

CHRISTMAS AT COURT

JAMES I brought with him from Scotland romantic notions of medieval chivalry and although he had a dislike of coarse spectacles, he liked nothing better than the tournament with all its attendant trappings. His eldest son, Henry, Prince of Wales, was a courageous and handsome young man, who, with his brothers, Charles and James, was inordinately fond of masques and pageants. On New Year's Day, 1610, Prince Henry issued a challenge to all the knights in the Kingdom to foregather at a tournament which was to be part of the usual Christmas celebrations which continued until Twelfth Night, and King James wished that it might be as splendid as possible in honour of the forthcoming investiture of Henry as Prince of Wales. Indeed, it was probably the most splendid event of James's reign. The King and Queen with the Ambassadors of Spain and Venice were among the distinguished company of spectators. There were nearly sixty knights taking part in the jousting which began at ten in the evening and continued until three in the morning, and the speeches at the barriers were written by Ben Jonson.

With the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, as far as Charles was concerned, Christmas ceased to be celebrated with that vigour which had marked the Courts of his noble ancestors. Plays were performed but there were no more masques or tournaments and Charles's royal magnificence extended only to the return of Father Christmas appearing at the season's banquet bearing the wassail bowl.

Under the Hanoverians Christmas appears to have become a private and unspectacular occasion. William IV's Consort, Queen Adelaide, introduced the custom of the Christmas tree from her native Germany, but the trees did not become generally popular until the time of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. The Victorian Christmas was pre-eminently a family festival, although affairs of state sometimes intruded themselves on the Court. On December 25, 1852, for instance, Lord Aberdeen who had just become Prime Minister, arrived at Windsor in the afternoon to inform the Queen of his completed cabinet list. In the present century Christmas has continued to be a family occasion and the introduction of radio and television has allowed the Monarch to address the wider family of the Commonwealth.

Father Christmas returns in 1660

SMOLLETT TRAVELS TO WINTER IN NICE

In 1763, irascible, middle-aged and a hypochondriac, Tobias Smollett left England to travel to the south of France with his family. His letters home were subsequently published as Travels through France and Italy. *They are an amusing and personal record of the period, giving numerous striking parallels between then and travel in France today.*

Boulogne sur Mer, June 23

I packed up my little family in a hired coach, and attended by my trusty servant, who had lived with me a dozen of years, and now refused to leave me, took the road to Dover, in my way to the South of France, where I hoped the mildness of the climate would prove favourable to the weak state of my lungs. . . .

I need not tell you this is the worst road in England, with respect to the conveniences of travelling, and must certainly impress foreigners with an unfavourable opinion of the nation in general. The chambers are in general cold and comfortless, the beds paultry, the cookery execrable, the wine poison, the attendance bad, the publicans insolent, and the bills extortion; there is not a drop of tolerable malt liquor to be had from London to Dover. . . .

Boulogne sur Mer, August 15

You have been very much mis-informed, by the person who compared Boulogne to Wapping: he did a manifest injustice to this place which is a large agreeable town, with broad open streets, excellently paved. . . .

Boulogne, September 12

I have hired a berline (type of carriage) and four horses to Paris. . . . The common coach between Calais and Paris, is such a vehicle as no man would use, who has any regard to his own ease and convenience; and it travels at the pace of an English waggon.

Paris, October 12

All manner of butcher's meat and poultry are extremely good in this place. The beef is excellent. The wine, which is generally drank, is a very thin kind of Burgundy. I can by no means relish their cookery; but one breakfasts deliciously upon their *petit pains* and their *patés* of butter, which last is exquisite. . . . Notwithstanding the gay disposition of the French, their houses are all gloomy.

Lyons, October 19

There are two post roads from Paris to Lyons, one of sixty-five posts, by the way of Moulins; the other of fifty-nine, by the way of Dijon in Burgundy. This last I chose, partly to save sixty livres, and partly to see the wine harvest of Burgundy, which, I was told, was a season of mirth and jollity among all ranks of people.

Montpellier, November 5

One day perceiving a meadow on the side of the road, full of a flower which I took to be the crocus, I desired my servant to alight and pull some of them. He delivered the musquetoon to Joseph (the driver), who began to tamper with it, and off it went with a prodigious report, augmented by an eccho from the mountains that skirted the road. The mules were so frightened, that they went off at the gallop; and Joseph, for some minutes, could neither manage the reins, nor open his mouth. At length he recollected himself, and the cattle were stopt, by the assistance of the servant to whom he delivered the musquetoon, with a significant shake of the head. Then alighting from the box, he examined the heads of his three mules, and kissed each of them in his turn. Finding they had received no damage, he came up to the coach, with a pale visage and staring eyes, and said it was God's mercy he had not killed his beasts. I answered, that it was a greater mercy he had not killed his passengers. . . .

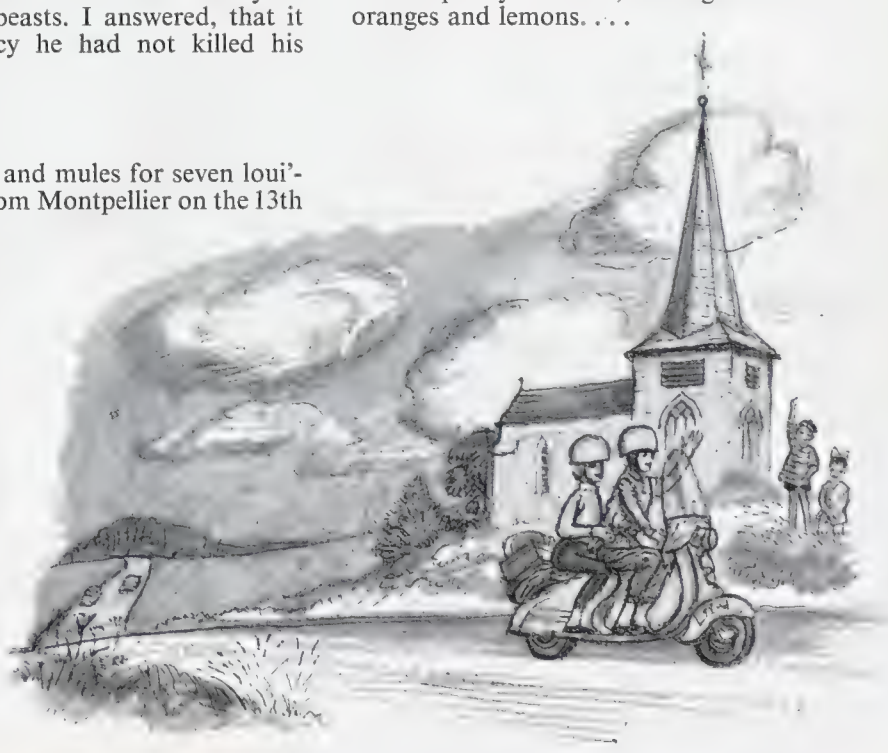
Nice, December 6

. . . I hired a coach and mules for seven loui'dores, and set out from Montpellier on the 13th of November, the weather being agreeable, though the air was cold and frosty. In other respects there were no signs of winter: the olives were now ripe, and appeared on each side of the road as black as sloes; and the corn was already half a foot high. . . .

Next day, when we set out in the morning from Luc, it blew a northwesterly wind so extremely cold and biting, that even a flannel wrapper could not keep me tolerably warm in the coach. . . .

When I rose in the morning, and opened a window that looked into the garden, I thought myself either in a dream or bewitched. All the trees were cloathed with snow, and all the country covered at least a foot thick. "This cannot be the south of France, (said I to myself) it must be the Highlands of Scotland!"

This night we passed at Cannes, a little fishing town. . . . In the afternoon we arrived at Nice. . . . I have taken a ground floor for ten months at the rate of four hundred livres a year, that is twenty pounds sterling. . . . The apartments are large, lofty, and commodious enough, with two small gardens, in which there is plenty of sallad, and a great number of oranges and lemons. . . .



Mlle. Claudine Möen outside one of Lanson's pressoirs at Rheims

CHAMPAGNE FOR CHRISTMAS

THE sparkling effervescence of champagne, surely the most luxurious of wines, has made it the favourite drink for festive occasions. This is, perhaps, by necessity, for the high price of the wine can be forgotten until the festivities are over. Then the cost can be justified by the thought that the celebration was, after all, "well worth while." These famous wines come only from one small corner of France, about twenty-five miles long by twenty miles wide, which lies in the district bordered by the towns of Rheims, Epernay and Chalon-sur-Marne.

This year one of the most famous champagne Houses of France, Lanson Père et Fils, is celebrating its 200th anniversary. With their long history Lansons can claim an association with the same vineyards since less than 100 years after the inception of champagne itself. In England, the champagne wines of Lanson Père et Fils are distributed exclusively by Percy Fox & Company Limited—and thereby hangs a tale. In 1885 Percy Fox, the founder of the firm, took over an agency in answer to an advertisement in *The Times*. The advertisement asked him to present himself in Rheims to Monsieur Lanson, the grandfather of the present head of the House, as an applicant for the agency in England of Lanson Champagne. After a mutually satisfactory interview, Mr. Fox was given an address in the City of London, and advised to discuss the agency with the man who was then acting as Lanson's distributor. Mr. Fox duly arrived and was shown into a waiting room. The man he had come to see looked in, and said he would receive Mr. Fox in a few moments. He was never seen again, but he was heard going down stairs a minute or two later.

And what of the champagne itself? The wine, as we now know it, was developed in France only in the 17th century.

One of the richest landlords in the Champagne district of France, the Marquis de Sillery, was responsible for introducing champagne to England, although tradition has it that the inventor was a Benedictine monk named Dom Perignon, Cellarer of the Abbey of Hautvilliers. As his agent in this country, the Marquis chose a gentleman called St. Evremond, who settled here after incurring the wrath of the French King. Through the efforts of these two men, we were able to enjoy champagne not long after it made its debut at the French Court.

"Disgorgement"

Every basket of grapes which goes to make champagne, has to be very carefully weighed. From each, four pressings are obtained. The highest quality juice is known as "La Cuvée," the next as the "Première Taille," and the third as the "Deuxième Taille." The final pressing, which is called the "Rebèche," is never sold as "champagne." After pressing, the juice is put into casks. These are not filled, and the bungs are not driven home, so that the carbonic gases and natural impurities can escape. When the wine is quite still, the real processing begins. Later the wine is transferred to bottles. These are first laid level when some sediment adheres to the side of the bottle, and then neck downwards so that all the sediment gathers around the cork. Then comes the highly delicate operation of "disgorgement," in which the sediment is drawn off. Finally the bottles are racked.

As for the time which champagne should be left before drinking, it is now generally accepted that five to ten years is the best.

Everyone from seven to seventy joins in the grape harvest at the vineyards at Lanson Père et Fils.

Workers at the Lanson Père et Fils' vineyards at Dizy tend the precious vines

Baskets of grapes waiting for pressing, and (right) the bottles stacked before "disgorgement"

WINTERING WITH WILLIAM COWPER

" But the long evenings have their comforts too; and there is hardly to be found upon earth, I suppose, so snug a creature as an Englishman, by his fireside, in the winter. I mean, however, an Englishman that lives in the country." So William Cowper wrote in October 1783 in a letter to a friend. At that time he was living in the little town of Olney, in Buckinghamshire, with his friend, Mary Unwin. The house at Orchard Side, with a tall, dingy façade crowned by a row of Gothic battlements, lay at the end of the High Street. Its garden was only a narrow strip of about 50 ft. by 20, between two high walls. But here, after a period of intense evangelical piety and a severe mental breakdown, William Cowper spent some of the happiest and most creative years of his melancholy life.

One of the poems he wrote was " The Task," a long section of which is entitled " The Winter Evening." It is, perhaps, the finest evocation in the English language of the domestic peace of a retired English country gentleman. He was always known at

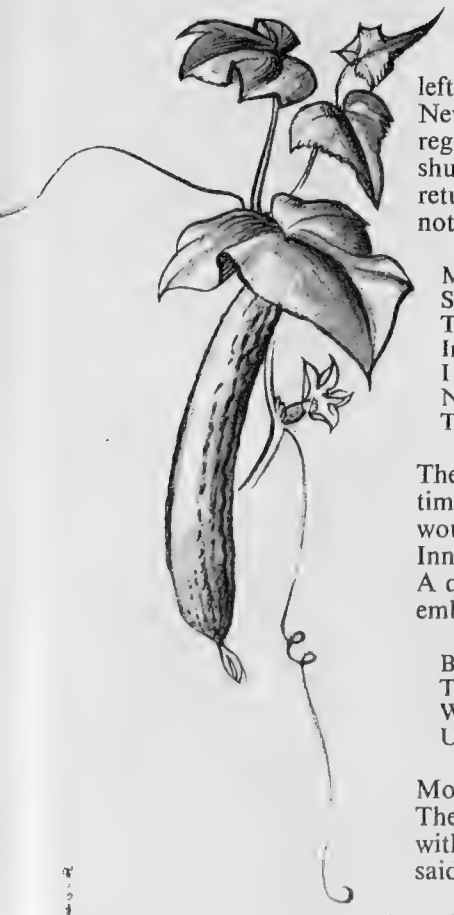
Cowper's birthplace (now demolished) at Berkhamsted in Hertfordshire, after a drawing by F. L. M. Griggs in *Highways and Byways in Hertfordshire*, 1902

> Let fall the curtains, wheel the sofa round,
> And while the bubbling and loud-hissing urn
> Throws up a steamy column, and the cups,
> That cheer but not inebriate, wait on each,
> So let us welcome peaceful evening in.
>
> *The Winter Evening.*

Olney as Sir Cowper, and the schoolmaster there habitually referred to him as " the Esquire." A florid healthy figure, dressed customarily in green and buff, he had a courtly manner, particularly successful with ladies. From his poems and letters it is possible to recapture the activities and atmosphere of those far-off winter days.

Winter was spent mostly in one room, the small, wainscotted parlour, with its window looking onto the street, spindle-legged chairs and a print of Cowper's friend Thurlow hung over the mantelpiece. Here, at ten o'clock Cowper had his breakfast, wearing his dressing gown and cap. The tea he drank was called Bohea, from a district in China. After breakfast, he used to read, while Mary sewed. Then, he had to make his round to look at the greenhouse (where in summer he worked) and to see that his pets were fed. There were an extraordinary number of these—three hares, named Bess, Puss and Tiny, goldfish, guinea pigs, birds, a cat and a dog, called Mungo.

During the morning he did two or three hours' work, on an old card table. (Since its arrival in a godly household, it had never been used for its original purpose.) It was too low for writing, so Cowper had to place a large old atlas on top. A walk followed, then dinner, and then possibly another walk. But often the weather was too bad to go out. (During the hard winter of 1781, Cowper and Mary hardly



left the house from November to February.) Nevertheless, Cowper managed to get in his regular exercise—swinging dumb-bells or playing shuttlecock or battledore. As dusk fell, Cowper returned to his writing, but more often than not he fell into a reverie staring into the fire:

Me oft has fancy ludicrous and wild
Sooth'd with a waking dream of houses, tow'rs,
Trees, churches, and strange visages express'd
In the red cinders, while with poring eye
I gazed, myself creating what I saw.
No less amused have I quiescent watch'd
The sooty films that play upon the bars. . . .

The moment that Cowper liked best was tea-time on a winter evening. Often he and Mary would hear the arrival of the post at the Bull Inn, bringing the newspaper from London. A quiet evening followed with Mary knitting or embroidering—

But here the needle plies its busy task,
The pattern grows, the well-depicted flow'r,
Wrought patiently into the snowy lawn,
Unfolds its bosom.

Most of the time was spent in conversation. They had a country supper of eggs and radishes, with a glass of wine, and then, candle in hand, said goodnight and went to bed.

During the period in which Cowper lived at Olney and the time when he moved to Weston Lodge, he was comparatively happy. He had published "John Gilpin," which was an immediate success, and then the long poem called "The Task," which was also a success. He had gathered friends around him, and his summers were a round of visits, picnics and dinners. But he was never free from the spectre of his madness, a form of extreme melancholia during which he believed he was damned. Some of his finest work was the product of his despair—

The Lodge, at Weston Underwood, 1½ miles from Olney in Buckinghamshire. William Cowper, who lived in the village from 1786 to 1795, thought that it was one of the most beautiful places in England

No voice divine the storm allay'd,
No light propitious shone,
When, snatch'd from all effectual aid,
We perished, each alone:
But I, beneath a rougher sea,
Am 'whelm'd in deeper gulphs than he.

But perhaps his fame—he is one of the most quoted poets in the English language—depends more upon his reflective pastoral poetry of the countryside, his pets and his home.

There have been many speculations over the form and reasons for Cowper's melancholia—"that manical Calvinist and coddled poet," according to Byron. Perhaps the death of his mother, whom he adored, affected him so much that he could never marry. He had one unhappy love affair with his cousin Theadora, when he was a young man, and he could only find happiness with a widow, Mary Unwin, who remained with him for the rest of his life. Some critics have alleged that the brutality of the public schools of the time affected Cowper so much that he retired into himself. He went to Westminster. A picture of school life at this time is given in this letter written by a boy of eleven:

MY DEAR, DEAR MOTHER,

If you don't let me come home, I die—I am all over ink, and my fine clothes have been spoilt—I have been tost in a blanket, and seen a ghost.

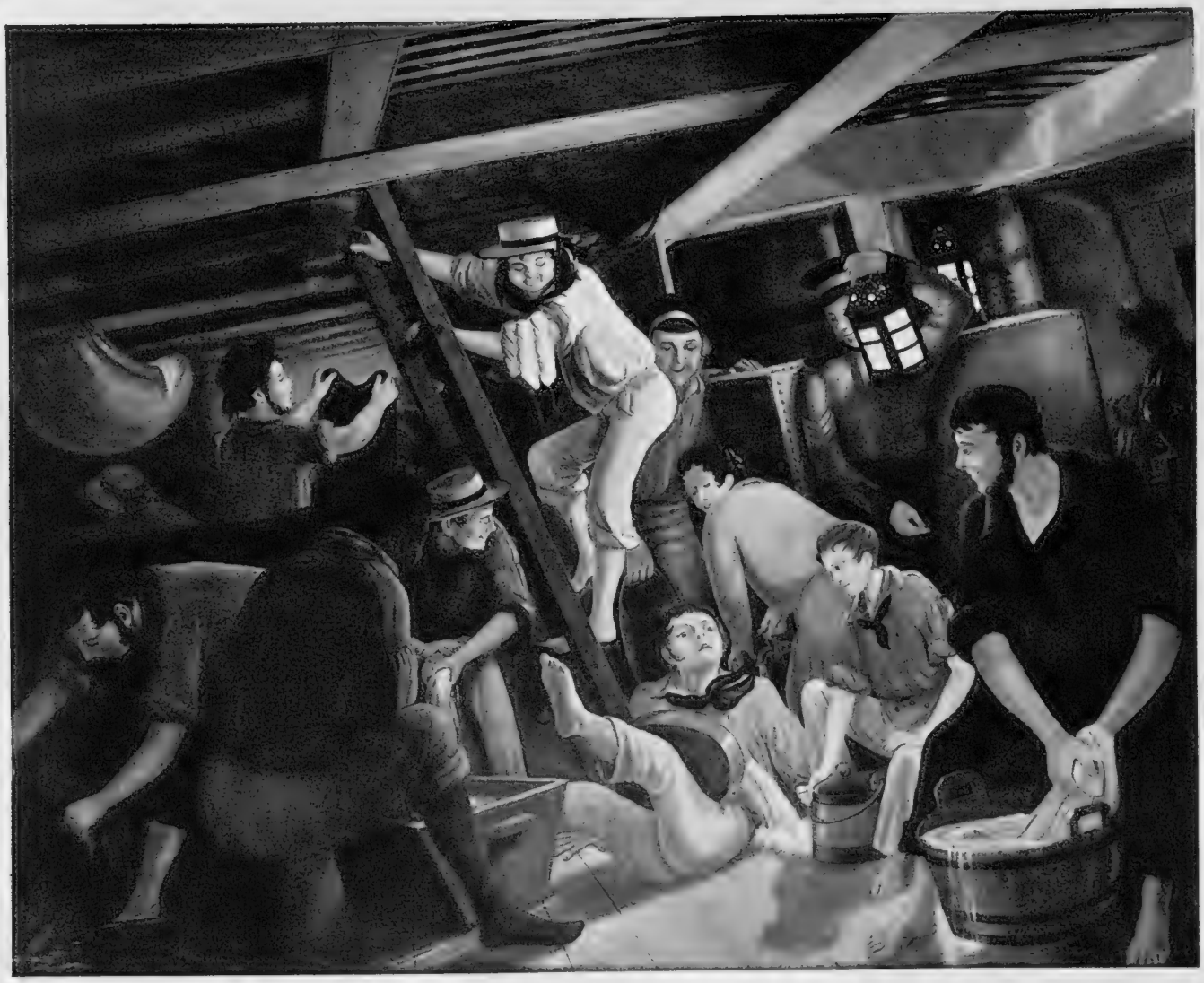
I remain my dear, dear mother,
Your dutiful, and most unhappy son,
FREDDY.

P.S.—Remember me to my father.

It is all too true that the public schools were not the most gentle of institutions, but Cowper was not as miserable as has been thought. He was successful at work and in games, and when he left, led a life of a young man about town. Whatever the reasons for his melancholia and fits of madness, Cowper in his writing gave one of the clearest pictures of the secure and peaceful life of a very English country gentleman of the eighteenth century.

Sketches by Terence Freeman

Strength may wield the pond'rous spade,
May turn the clod, and wheel the compost home,
But elegance, chief grace the garden shows
And most attractive, is the fair result
Of thought, the creature of a polish'd mind.
The Garden.



Below deck towards the middle of the nineteenth century

"The Midshipmen's Birth," published in 1830

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'TWEEN DECKS

The picture at top is an oil painting of seamen in their quarters around 1840. The second picture on this page has the following explanation: The grog is out, as the *black jack* and the *broken bottle* in the fore-ground shew; the gallant *Youths* before us, therefore, fly to some other recreation. Although an engagement has recently taken place (visible from the *wounds* of several), frolics are the order of the day; and their *sleepy Comrades* suggest the common trick of *blackening the faces of two of the Sleepers*, that, on waking, *each* may deem the other the butt. The *merry Lieutenant* (a visitor), with a *burnt cork* is busily engaged on the face of a *young Midshipman*, who, buried in sound sleep amidst a combination of noises, becomes fair game to all. *One Midshipman* eagerly waits the Lieutenant's finishing touch, to wake him by *dropping something into his open mouth*; whilst another has a *speaking-trumpet* ready, and inflates his lungs, to start him with a loud hallooah: at the same time, a *young Pickle* is busy in front, *sewing the coats of the two Sleepers together*, anticipating (from his features) much fun in their suddenly upsetting each other: even *Mungo*, though in the back-ground, is not backward in enjoyment; nay, the *Midshipman* just returned from his watch, and *hanging up his coat*, indulges in a smile, forgetting that empty bottles are his allowance.

At the other end, the *Clerk*, *whose face* HAS *been smutted*, is just being waked by a *Master's Mate*, seemingly a *little groggy*: he tells him of the trick that is being played upon the other, and the *drowsy Clerk*, *yawning and suppressing a stretch, proclaims the* OTHER *a sleepy fellow, properly served*; whilst *two Younkers* smile and whisper at his simplicity. Another *Master's Mate*, just *returned from a chilling watch*, as his red face shews, has prudently provided himself with a bottle from another mess, which he exultingly brings in, but is pursued and *collared* by a *Midshipman*, who seeks to recapture the prize.

The *confusion* of such a scene is additionally illustrated by a medley formed of *chessmen*, a *backgammon-board*, a *desk*, a *log-book*, a *horn*, *&c.*; whilst the *broken candle* in the *bottle*, *inundating with tallow the renowned* HAMILTON MOORE, shews the great care that is generally taken of his valuable instructions.

CHRISTMAS DAY IN THE ROYAL NAVY

By Rear-Admiral A. D. Nicholl, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O.

Illustrations by Geoffrey Whittam

The ship's officers on Rounds during Christmas morning

The Christmas spirit has a way of showing itself in unexpected places, and it certainly produces remarkable results in the realm of naval discipline. It has always been found necessary in ships, and indeed in every type of vessel down to the smallest boat, to have strict and immediate compliance with the orders of the Captain or the man in charge in the interests of the safety of everyone on board. Anyone who has accepted an invitation to go out in a yacht in the expectation of a day's do-as-you-please relaxation has been speedily disillusioned. For obvious reasons, the firmest discipline is to be found in ships of war. In fighting ships where shot and shell are no respecters of rank it is supremely important to have a very clearly defined chain of command so that if casualties occur there is never any doubt as to who is in charge of the ship and who is responsible for giving orders. A vital part of naval discipline, therefore, is concerned with the obedience of orders and respect for anyone of superior rank.

Christmas Day, however, is a day on which, traditionally, discipline is relaxed. In the Royal Navy of to-day, the relationships between seniors and juniors and between officers and men are excellent; obedience of orders and respect for one's superiors are seen as the discipline of common sense. But in the Royal Navy of the past, particularly in the old days of sail, discipline compared with that of to-day was rigid and harsh. This was partly due, of course, to the fact that most of the crew of a ship were " pressed " men who could not be expected to accept discipline willingly. The tradition of relaxed discipline on Christmas Day, however, dates back hundreds of years.

In peacetime, Christmas celebrations are almost entirely confined to foreign stations; for on the Home Station Christmas-time is a period when long leave is given to at least half the ship's company, and only the unlucky few required for safety and fire precautions have to remain on board on Christmas Day. The traditional custom is that the Captain and officers go " Rounds " when the ship's company is piped to dinner at midday. They go into every mess, stop for a yarn and are offered tots of rum or samples of Christmas fare. On any other day the acceptance of a drink or gift from a rating is a breach of discipline for which an officer would be court-martialled. The brunt of receiving the hospitality naturally falls on the Captain, and Rounds in a big ship is quite a test of stamina. Most Captains find that they have to exercise their powers of delegation over at least a portion of the many tots they are offered. After Rounds the smallest boy, dressed in an officer's uniform, calls on the wardroom and is toasted with all ceremony by the officers. Needless to say, he is usually accompanied by a fair-sized body of his shipmates who share in the general conviviality.

In the matter of Christmas decorations, the customs ashore and afloat are identical. Just as we adorn our homes with holly and other evergreens and with all sorts of fancy streamers, so the ships of the Royal Navy hoist a large bunch of evergreens to the masthead at dawn on Christmas Day, and the messes vie with each other in gay paper decorations, burnished mess lids and kettles, and intricate patterns of nuts and fruit on the mess tables.

The earliest record of a Christmas Day in the Navy is in the diary of Henry Teonge, who was a chaplain in one of King Charles II's ships. This is his description of Christmas Day 1675:

Christmas Day we keep thus. At four in the morning our trumpeters all do flat (blow) their trumpets and begin at our Captain's cabin and thence to all

(*Continued on following pages*)

Stirring the Christmas pudding with a paddle

A warship adorned with holly and other evergreens

CHRISTMAS DAY IN THE ROYAL NAVY

(*Continued from previous page*)

the officers' and gentlemen's cabins playing a levite (trumpet call) at each cabin door and bidding "Good morrow. Wishing a Merry Christmas." After, they go to their station, viz., on the poop, and sound three levites in honour of the morning. At ten we go to prayers and sermon; Text Zacc. IX, 9. Our Captain had all his officers and gentlemen to dinner with him where we had excellent good fare: a rib of beef, plum pudding, mincepies, etc., and plenty of good wines of several sorts. Drank health to the King, to our wives and friends; and ended the day with much civil mirth.

In Nelson's day the "civil mirth" seems to have gone to considerable lengths. Christmas Day was described as a day of "general topsy-turvydom." In those days the ships' companies "spliced the main-brace," that is, had an extra tot of grog, on Christmas Day, but that practice has been discontinued. One of the customs was the "chairing" of officers round the ship. A dozen or more ratings, all more or less under the influence of liquor, would take a grating and go round from cabin to cabin crying, "Come out, Mr. ——, come out, sir. We are a-going to carry you round." The officer would then be put on the grating and given a most uncomfortable ride round the ship, visiting every mess and having to partake of plum duff and grog in each of them. Unpopular officers often had a bad time of it. They were subjected to a good deal of rough play and were sometimes pelted with flour bags, vegetables or other edibles. "Chairing" has evolved into the comparatively sedate Rounds of the present day.

It is the responsibility of the Supply Officer of to-day, as of the purser in the old days, to ensure that Christmas fare is provided. To-day, with the Admiralty messing allowance, there is no difficulty over the Christmas extras, but in the old days the purser had less scope. He regarded himself as entitled to make what he could out of his victualling and stores allowance, the men fared extremely badly and the purser was usually the most unpopular officer on board, rejoicing in such nicknames as "Mr. Nipcheese" or "The Tizzie-snatcher" ("tizzie" is the lower-deck slang for a sixpenny piece). However, he always managed to provide extras for the Christmas dinner, perhaps in a forlorn attempt to arouse esteem.

Christmas puddings are mixed with traditional ceremony on the quarter deck on an appropriate day before Christmas. The ingredients are put into a large wooden tub with a liberal supply of rum and some handfuls of "tizzies." The mixture is then stirred with a well-scrubbed wooden paddle from one of the ship's life-saving rafts, and as a rule the Captain or, in a flagship, the Admiral, gives the first stir. On at least one occasion this ceremony has been carried out by a member of the fair sex. The late Dame Vera Laughton Mathews, who was Director of the Wrens in the last war, paid a visit to the flagship of the Home Fleet, H.M.S. *Duke of York*, in December 1943. As it happened the flagship's Christmas pudding was being mixed on that day and Mrs. Laughton Mathews, as she was then, was invited to take the first turn with the paddle. Who can deny that she stirred in some good luck? For on Christmas Day the *Duke of York* and a force of cruisers and destroyers were in far northern waters covering a Russian convoy. The German battle-cruiser *Scharnhorst* came out to attack the convoy but was sunk by our ships on Boxing Day. Christmas dinner had been postponed and was eaten with extra relish on return to harbour.

There is nothing in Queen's Regulations on the subject of "tizzies" for Christmas puddings, and there is certainly no Admiralty allowance for the purpose. One supply officer I know, on meeting this situation for the first time, put in all the six-pences he had in the ship's money safe, refunding the money from his own pocket. Such benevolence on the part of the supply officer seems to be the usual practice, one which is unlikely to have commended itself to the "tizzie-snatchers" of a bygone age.

"Chairing" an officer on a grating in times past

In wartime it is often impossible to have Christmas celebrations in the traditional way, but if ships are in harbour there is usually a certain amount of decorating of messes and the customary Rounds are carried out up to a point. In the First World War the ships spent much of their time in readiness at their bases which were secure from attack; at Scapa Flow, for example, most ships could enjoy their Christmas. Those who were serving in one of the Battle Squadrons at Christmas-time in 1917, however, have painful memories of being ordered to sea at three o'clock in the afternoon of Christmas Day. They went out into a full gale and it is said that in H.M.S. *Orion*, the flagship, every man-jack on board was seasick, with the exception of the Admiral, " Barge " Goodenough. On Christmas Day 1917, when I was " Sub " of the patrol boat *P.*53, I was the only officer on board during a boiler-cleaning period in Portsmouth dockyard. It was a lovely, still morning, and as I had unexpectedly found a bugle in the ship's stores, I decided to " salute the morn," unconsciously following the custom of the trumpeters of Charles II's time. I had been a bugler in my school's Officers' Training Corps band and, concealing myself in the canvas canopy over the wardroom hatch, I sounded off " colours " when we hoisted the Ensign at 9 a.m. Most " small ship " men believe in using the bos'n's pipe or a whistle to call men to attention for ceremonies or instructions; the sound of a bugle in a small ship is usually anathema. However, I thought my bugle call sounded fine in the quiet waters round North Corner Jetty, and when I emerged from the canopy I was gratified to see the startled faces in the other small ships berthed alongside.

During the Second World War the possibility of air raids at any time put a damper on Christmas celebrations in most ships in harbour in Home waters and on a good many Foreign stations. In Malta in 1941, however, when I was in command of the cruiser *Penelope*, we were able to enjoy our Christmas Day in the traditional way. The ship was undergoing a quick docking, so there was the comfortable knowledge that we could not be sent to sea at short notice. There had also been a lull in the air raids on the island. So decorations were quickly improvised, and after Morning Church I went Rounds accompanied by all the officers. After Rounds, a representative body of the ship's company invaded my cabin, headed by a band mainly composed of the percussion section. Officers and men finally sat down to dinner in fairly good order. As it happened, the ship was due to become waterborne later in the day but, owing to some misunderstanding, the dock was " flooded up " unexpectedly just as we were stowing away our Christmas pudding. The ship floated off the blocks and slowly heeled over to port, assuming a list of about 5 degrees. However, as everyone knows, it is impossible for a ship in dry dock to heel over; so no-one said a word. Viewed from the outside the ship now presented a decidedly rakish appearance, with the evergreen garland hanging at an angle from the masthead, and a passing sailor was heard to observe, " Cor, wot a party ! Even the ship 'as 'ad a drop too much ! "

My most memorable Christmas was on board the battleship *Duke of York* at Hong Kong in 1945, when I was flag captain to the C.-in-C., British Pacific Fleet, Admiral Fraser. The war was over, we knew that we would soon be going home and we could have a really happy Christmas. The Hong Kong shops had provided a wealth of paper decorations and when we went Rounds, the messes were the gayest I have ever seen. The ship had recently paid a short visit to Amoy, where large numbers of the local toy cats had been bought to take home. Every mess table had its quota of Amoy cats with their waggling heads and bright colours. Rounds was quite a strenuous affair in so large a ship, so it was with feelings not far from dismay that Admiral Fraser and I regarded the deputation waiting for us as we finally emerged on to the Upper Deck. They had come to invite us to go Rounds in the two destroyers berthed alongside the *Duke of York*; and it had to be done.

" *The spirit of Christmas is back again.*" *Carol singing in Hong Kong in* 1945

The most memorable incident, however, in a very happy day came in the evening. The *Duke of York's* sister-ship the *Anson* had got together a party of carol-singers who went round the ships in the harbour after dusk and, gathering on the foc's'le round a candle-lamp hoisted on a boathook stave, sang the favourite old carols most tunefully. I listened to them from the bridge and will never forget the scene: the glow of the candle in the darkness with flickering gleams from the bronzed shoulders of the great crowd of sailors grouped round and joining in the singing. It was a still evening, and as the sound of the men's voices carried across the calm water, many people must have shared my thought, " The Spirit of Christmas is back again."

ÆSOP'S FABLES

A key to Pauline Baynes illustrations on pages 18 and 19.

1. The Tortoise and the Hare is one of the best-known of Æsop's fables.

2. A bat asked a bird in a cage why she never sang by day but only at night. She explained there was good reason: it was while she was singing once in the daytime that she was captured and this had taught her a lesson. " It 's no good taking precautions now," said the bat, " You should have been careful before you were caught." The moral is that it is too late to be sorry after you have let things go wrong.

3. A stag observing his reflection while drinking from a spring was proud of his antlers but dissatisfied by his slender legs. Then he was chased by a lion. The stag kept well ahead in open country but on entering a wood his antlers were caught in the branches of a tree. As he was about to be killed, " Alas! " he thought, " my legs which I feared would fail me, were my preservation, and the antlers that filled me with such confidence are destroying me." *Moral:* It often happens, when we are in danger, that the friends whose loyalty we doubted prove our saviours, while those in whom we put implicit trust betray us.

4. Hermes appeared by a woodman who had lost his axe in a river. The god dived into the water and brought up first a gold axe and then a silver one. The woodman said they were not his so Hermes dived again and brought up the right one. He was so pleased with the man's honesty that he made him a present of the other axes. One of the woodmen's mates heard this story and went to the river and deliberately threw in his axe. Hermes again appeared, dived in and brought up the gold axe. The man immediately claimed it as his own. The god was so shocked at his unblushing impudence that far from giving him the gold axe, he did not even restore his own to him. This fable shows that heaven is as determined to thwart a rogue as it is ready to help an honest man.

5. The fable of the fox and the grapes.

6. A man whose hair was turning grey had two mistresses, one young and the other old. The old one was ashamed of having a younger man make love to her, and when he came to her she kept pulling out the black hairs from his head. The young woman, who did not like the idea of having an old man for a lover, used to pull out his grey hairs. So between them they ended by making him completely bald. *Moral:* Ill-assorted companions never come by any good.

7. Zeus summoned the birds so that he could choose the most handsome as their king. A jackdaw, realising how plain he was, bedecked himself in feathers the other birds moulted. Zeus was about to choose him as the gayest when the others in indignation plucked off the jackdaw's finery. *Moral:* Men in debt are like this bird. They cut a dash on other people's money. Make them pay up and you can recognise them for the nobodies they always are.

8. For the weak to try to imitate the strong is courting destruction. Once upon a time a frog saw an ox in a meadow and was envious of its huge bulk. So she swelled out her body till all the wrinkles disappeared and then asked her children if she was now fatter than the ox. " No," they said. With a still greater effort she stretched her skin tight, and asked which was the bigger now. " The ox," they answered. At last she got cross, and making frantic efforts to blow herself out still more, she burst herself and died.

9. A lion was about to eat a rat which had run over him while asleep. The rat promised to repay him if he would spare its life. The lion laughed and let it go. Later the lion was captured by hunters and tied to a tree. The rat freed him by gnawing through the rope. *Moral:* A change of fortune can make the strongest man need a weaker man's help.

10. A fox was determined to get a piece of meat which a crow up a tree was holding in his beak. It stood at the bottom of the trunk and praised the crow for his beauty, saying he would undoubtedly have been made king of the birds if he had a voice as well. The crow dropped the meat and croaked for all he was worth. Snapping up the meat, the fox said, " if you added brains to all your other qualifications you would make an ideal king."

11. A cock which had got the worst of a fight with its rival for the favours of the hens went and hid in a dark corner, while the victor climbed onto a high wall and crowed at the top of its voice. Immediately an eagle swooped down and snatched it up. The other was safe in its dark hiding-place, and was now able to woo the hens without fear of interruption. *Moral:* This story shows that God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.

12. A dog, lying in a manger, would neither eat the barley herself nor allow the horse, which could eat it, to come near it.

13. A dog had a way of biting people on the sly, and his master hung a bell round his neck so that everyone would know when he was about. He then started to shake his bell and show off in the market place. " What makes you fancy yourself so? " an old bitch asked him. " That bell of yours is not a prize for good behaviour. You are carrying it because the vicious nature you concealed so carefully has been discovered." *Moral:* The vainglorious ways of imposters only serve to expose their secret sins.

14. " Crying wolf " is another very well-known fable.

15. A young rake had wasted his inheritance and had nothing left but a cloak. Seeing a swallow which had arrived before the usual season, he thought that summer had come and that he did not need the cloak any longer. So he took it and sold it like all the rest. But afterwards wintry weather set in with a keen frost, and as he was walking one day he saw the swallow frozen to death. " Miserable creature," he said; " you have destroyed both yourself and me." *Moral:* It is always dangerous to choose the wrong time for doing a thing.

16. Two men who hated each other were on the same ship, one sitting in the stern, the other in the bows. A storm came on and when the ship was on the point of sinking the man in the stern asked the steersman which part of the ship would go under water first. On being told the bows would go first, " I do not mind dying myself," he said, " if I can see my enemy die before me." *Moral:* Many men do not care what happens to themselves, so long as they see their enemies suffer first.

17. Pulling his net ashore, a fisherman caught the big fish in it and spread them out on the ground. But the smaller ones escaped in the sea through the meshes. *Moral:* It is easy for people of moderate fortune to be safe, but you will rarely see a man of great note escape from peril.

18. A lion and a boar started fighting over who should drink first at a small spring. Pausing for breath they saw vultures waiting for one of them to be killed. So they made up their quarrel. *Moral:* Strife and contention are ill things which end in danger for all parties, if they have not the sense to be reconciled.

19. The reed bows to the storm and survives. The olive tree resists and is broken.

20. A wolf wanted to find a specious pretext for devouring a lamb drinking from a river. He accused the lamb of muddying the water so he could not drink. The lamb replied that he drank only with the tip of his tongue and was standing lower down the river than the wolf. Then the wolf accused the lamb of insulting his (the wolf's) father the previous year. The lamb replied he was not even born then. " You 're good at finding answers," said the wolf, " but I 'm going to eat you all the same." *Moral:* When a man is determined to get his knife into someone, he will turn a deaf ear to any plea, however just.

21. A half-starved fox crept in and ate some food left in the hollow of an oaktree. With his stomach distended he could not get out. He was told by another fox that he 'd have to stay there until he was as thin as when he went in. This tale shows how time solves difficult problems.

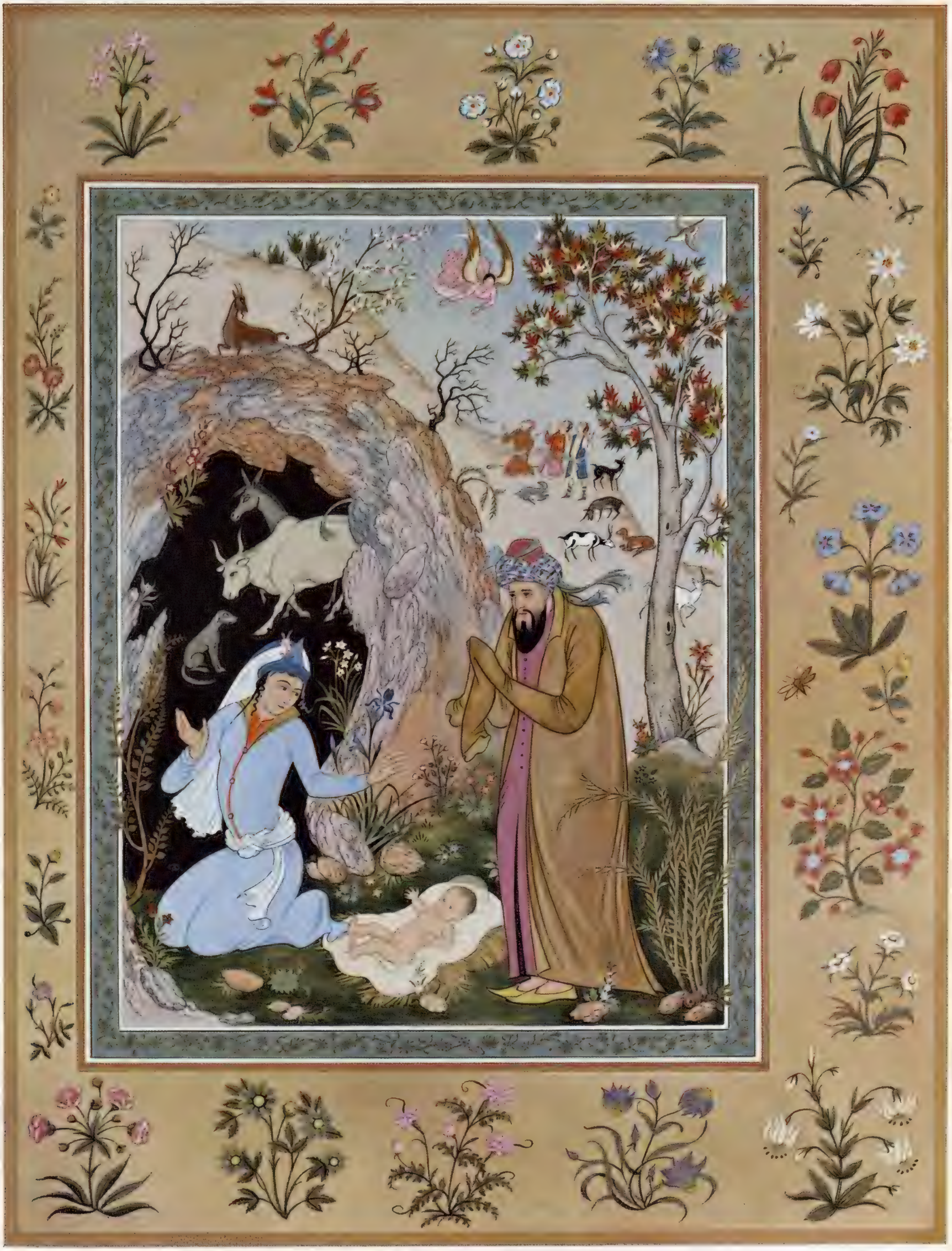
22. The rats, at war with the weasels, elected generals who fixed horns on their heads as distinguishing marks. The rats were routed in battle. All escaped into their holes except the generals, who, unable to get in on account of their horns, were caught and devoured. *Moral:* Vainglory is often the cause of misfortune.

23. A mouse who lived in a town house scorned the frugal fare of a field-mouse and took him to the town. There was an abundance of good things to eat but the mice frequently had to scuttle for shelter during meals, because of interruptions by human beings. So the field-mouse decided to go home. *Moral:* A simple life with peace and quiet is better than faring luxuriously and being tortured by fear.

24. In winter-time a hungry cicada asked the ants to give it some of their store of grain. " Why did you not gather food in the summer, like us? " they said. " I hadn't time," it replied; " I was busy making sweet music." The ants laughed at it. " Very well," they said, " since you piped in summer, now dance in winter." *Moral:* In everything beware of negligence, if you want to escape distress and danger.

25. A wolf which had swallowed a bone offered a heron a fee to remove it. The heron put its head down his throat, pulled out the bone, and then claimed the promised reward. " Are you not content, my friend," said the wolf, " to have got your head safe and sound out of a wolf's mouth, but you must demand a fee as well? " *Moral:* When one does a bad man a service, the only recompense one can hope for is that he will not add injury to ingratitude.

Translations are taken from F. A. Handford's " Fables of Æsop " (Penguin Books, 1954).



The Nativity has inevitably been one of the favourite Biblical subjects portrayed by artists. Their paintings and drawings have been influenced by the periods and the places in which they have lived. The Italian Schools are an obvious example of this. In almost every country and age, one can find local and contemporary interpretations of the Stable at Bethlehem. The Birth of Christ has been illustrated in twentieth-century settings and Chinese artists have depicted it in Far Eastern surroundings. Pauline Baynes has painted her Nativity in the Persian style. Since Persia is in the Middle East, the area of the Holy Land, there is no incongruity about this. Miss Baynes has illustrated a number of translations of Persian books for children. The dog in her Christmas painting is copied from a Persian manuscript.

THE NATIVITY

An interpretation
by Pauline Baynes

In the centre of stage are Prince Florimund (Desmond Doyle) and Princess Aurora (Susan Alexander) as the performance of *The Sleeping Beauty*, danced by the Royal Ballet, reaches its happy ending. In front of the couple are some of the fairies who have helped bring about this conclusion. The ballet set to Tchaikovsky's music is among the most popular in classical repertoire. It was written for the Imperial Ballet in St. Petersburg and first performed in the Maryinsky Theatre on January 3, 1890. The scenario is based on the fairy story as told by Perrault. To the christening of the Princess Aurora come six fairies: the Fairy of the Crystal Fountain; the Fairy of the Enchanted Garden; the Fairy of the Woodland Glades; the Fairy of the Songbirds; the Fairy of the Golden Vine; and the Fairy of the Lilac. Each dances before the cradle of the Princess to bestow on the baby all the gifts of the earth. But by an oversight another fairy—Carabosse—has been overlooked in the list of invitations by the Master of the Ceremonies. Thunder and lightning rage and flash as in evil mood she arrives at the celebrations in a chariot drawn

The Sleeping Beauty

The Royal Ballet dance in the finale of a famous classic

Photograph by Houston Rogers

by rats and mice. The music conjures up curses through which Carabosse prophesies that the Princess when she reaches the age of 16 will prick her finger and die. Fortunately the Fairy of the Lilac has not yet presented her gift. She cannot prevent the pricking occurring as forecast but she modifies the death sentence to a sleep for a hundred years, after which, she proclaims, a charming prince will awaken the Princess with a kiss. And so it turns out. The time comes when Princess Aurora is cast under a spell for a hundred years, during which she and all animate beings in the palace are asleep. Then, guided by the Fairy of the Lilac, Prince Florimund makes his way through the brambles and awakens Aurora. All that remains is for their wedding to be celebrated with a display of brilliant dancing. The wide staircase has become the accepted background for the finale since a setting of this kind was first used in the Maryinsky Theatre 70 years ago. Last summer there were seven performances of *The Sleeping Beauty* at Covent Garden. Five pairs of dancers performed at different times in the leading roles.

View from Scotland Yard—a coloured aquatint published in 1795 by T. Malton. Left is the Old Water Tower with the Adelphi behind and then Somerset House (centre background)

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THE ADELPHI

John Adam Street, with the Royal Society of Arts on the left—published 1795

Adam Street, another part of the Adelphi—an aquatint published in 1796

The buildings called the Adelphi—coloured line engraving by and after Green, *c.* 1790

There are today only a few sad fragments left of the old Adelphi, the daring and elegant scheme of houses along the Thames, designed by the Adam brothers. Over the years, since the enterprise was built at the end of the eighteenth century, most of the houses have disappeared, and new buildings have sprung up. In one of these, in John Adam Street, the SPHERE found a new home at the end of last year. The story of the Adelphi is one of the golden days of Georgian architecture, which has left its stamp on most subsequent urban building. In the era up to the beginning of the Napoleonic war, there were two architects who vied with each other for the leadership and for the tempting professional plums in a prolific period of building. One of them was Sir William Chambers and the other Robert Adam. Sir William was the heavyweight of the contest, the official architect, and Adam, the lightweight, the charm of whose designs entranced London. Sir William's great work was Somerset House, only a short distance away from the Adelphi.

After a successful period of working on country houses, the Adam brothers turned to their greatest venture, the Adelphi. Robert Adam was supported by James, his "lieutenant," and John, the business man. In 1768, they took a 99-year lease from the Duke of St. Albans of the site of Durham House. They cleared the site and three years later sought an Act of Parliament to enable them to reclaim a shallow "bay" formed by the Thames, and erect a wharf and other buildings. In spite of opposition they got permission and work was well under way by 1772. The plan of the scheme was for a large terrace of houses, 41 windows long, facing the Thames with streets running down to the river on either side. Brick catacombs supported the houses, providing storage space behind the wharf.

Financially however, the affair was disastrous. The Ordnance Department did not rent all the vaults. And although David Garrick had given the scheme as much publicity as he could, the houses did not sell. The brothers, faced with bankruptcy, resorted to a lottery. There were 4,370 tickets at £50 each and 108 prizes. This saved the day and the Adams remained solvent. With its gay decorations and pleasing lines, the scheme was an architectural success, although there were critics—Walpole said it was "like a soldier's trull in a regimental old coat." The subsequent history is sad. In 1872, the Victorian passion for stucco proved overwhelming and the exterior was remodelled and ruined.

The Adelphi Terrace, facing the Thames

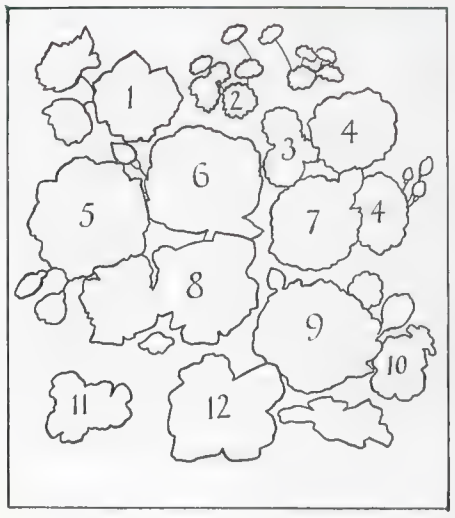
OLD FASHIONED ROSES

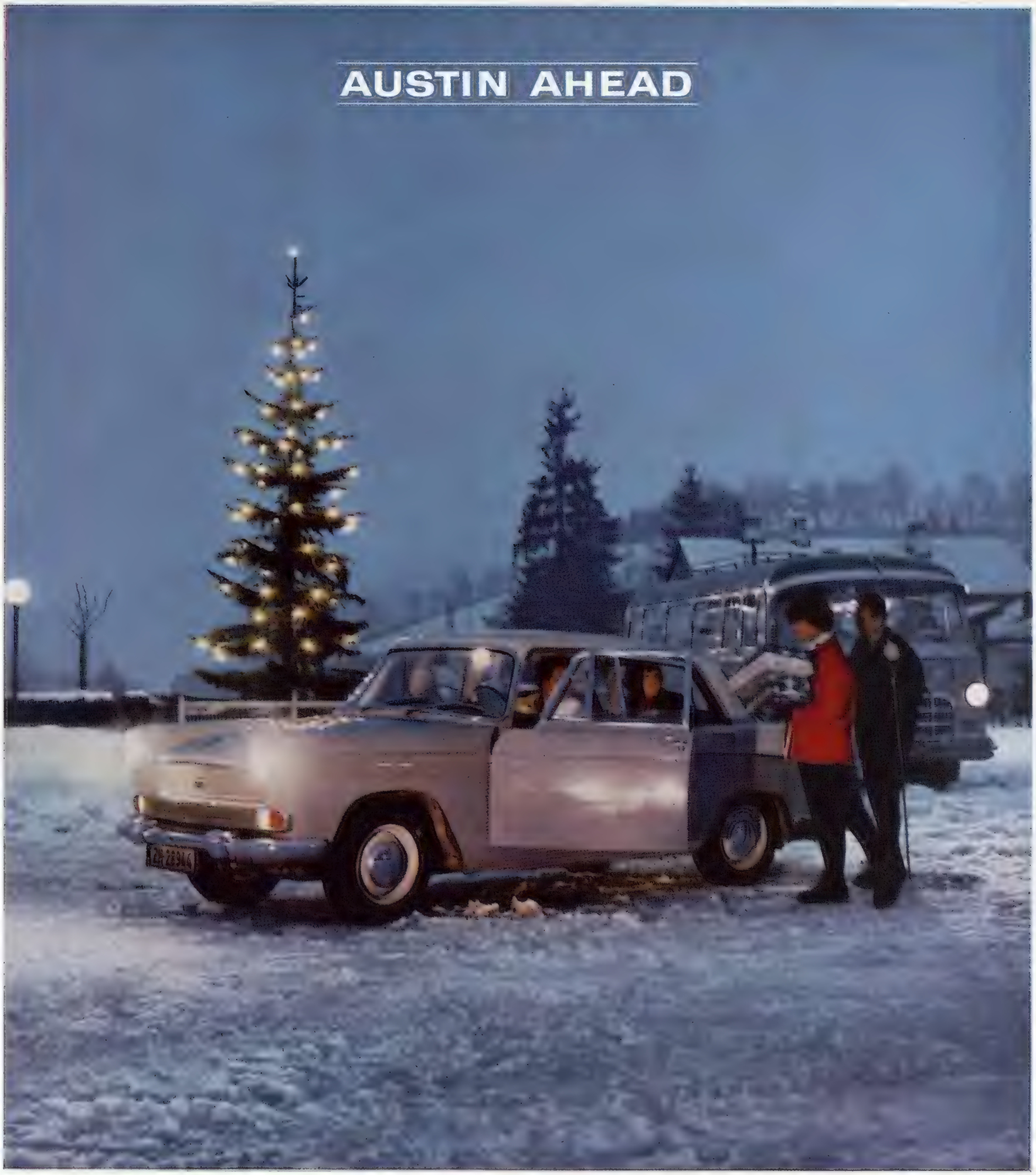
Whether growing wild in the English countryside—

Unkempt about those hedges blows
An English unofficial rose

—or cultivated in gardens, roses are to be found almost everywhere. The flower existed on earth before man arrived; in many museums there are fossil remains millions of years old. The 'old fashioned' English varieties owed their origins to a number of different species which were crossed to produce numerous hybrids.

The key to the painting is as follows: (1) *Rosa damascena versicolor*, named in 1551 and known as the 'York and Lancaster.' (2) *Rosa Banksiae* var. *lutea*, from China. (3) *Rosa multiflora carnea*, from China and Japan. (4) Capitaine John Ingram, introduced in 1856. It is a Moss rose, a favourite species in Victorian times. (5) *Rosa gallica versicolor*, also called *Rosa Mundi* or Fair Rosamund's Rose. (6) *Rosa centifolia*, the Rose of Provence or Cabbage Rose. (7) Madame Hardy, a Damask Rose introduced in 1832. (8) Zéphirine Drouhin, a famous hybrid Bourbon rose, known as the 'Thornless rose.' (9) *Rosa alba regalis*, sometimes called the 'white rose of Yorkshire.' There is a whiter variety, *Rosa alba maxima*. (10) *Rosa Moyesii* var. *Fargesii*, from China. (11) *Rosa agrestis*, a species rose. (12) *Rosa gallica rosea*, of very ancient origin.





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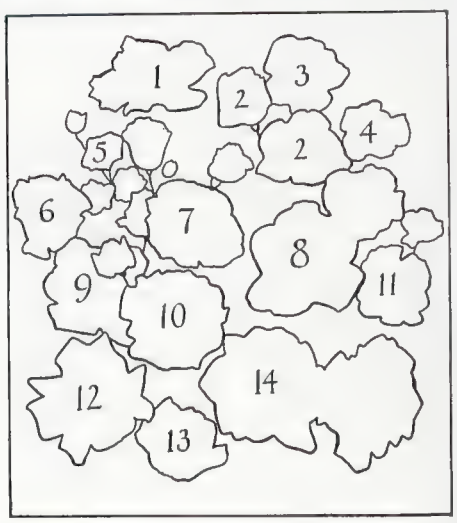
MODERN TYPES OF ROSES

The beginnings of the modern types of roses came in the nineteenth century. It was in France that the first tea rose, whose scent was said to resemble that of a China tea chest, was cultivated. Since then innumerable varieties have been produced and many new ones are introduced every year, although not all of them are cultivated on a large scale. Compared to the delicately scented and coloured 'old fashioned' roses, many of the modern varieties are spectacularly large and vivid. All the yellow, orange and flame colours conspicuous in the rose gardens are derived from an orange-yellow hybrid, called 'Soleil d'Or,' produced in France in 1900.

The key to the painting is: (1) Modern Times. (2) Grand'mère Jenny, a hybrid tea with subtle shades of colour. (3) Soraya, a hybrid tea. (4) Mrs. G. A. van Rossem. (5) Goldilocks, a lovely floribunda rose. (6) Sultane, a bi-coloured hybrid tea. (7) The Queen Elizabeth, a floribunda. (8) Peace, a hybrid tea, described when it first appeared as the 'rose of the century.' (9) Zulu Queen, a hybrid tea, one of the darkest of the red roses. (10) Fashion, a floribunda. (11) Frensham, a floribunda. (12) Walter Bentley, one of the most striking roses introduced shortly before the last war. (13) Soeur Thérèse, a hybrid tea, one of the ancestors of the Queen Elizabeth. (14) Ena Harkness, a hybrid tea.



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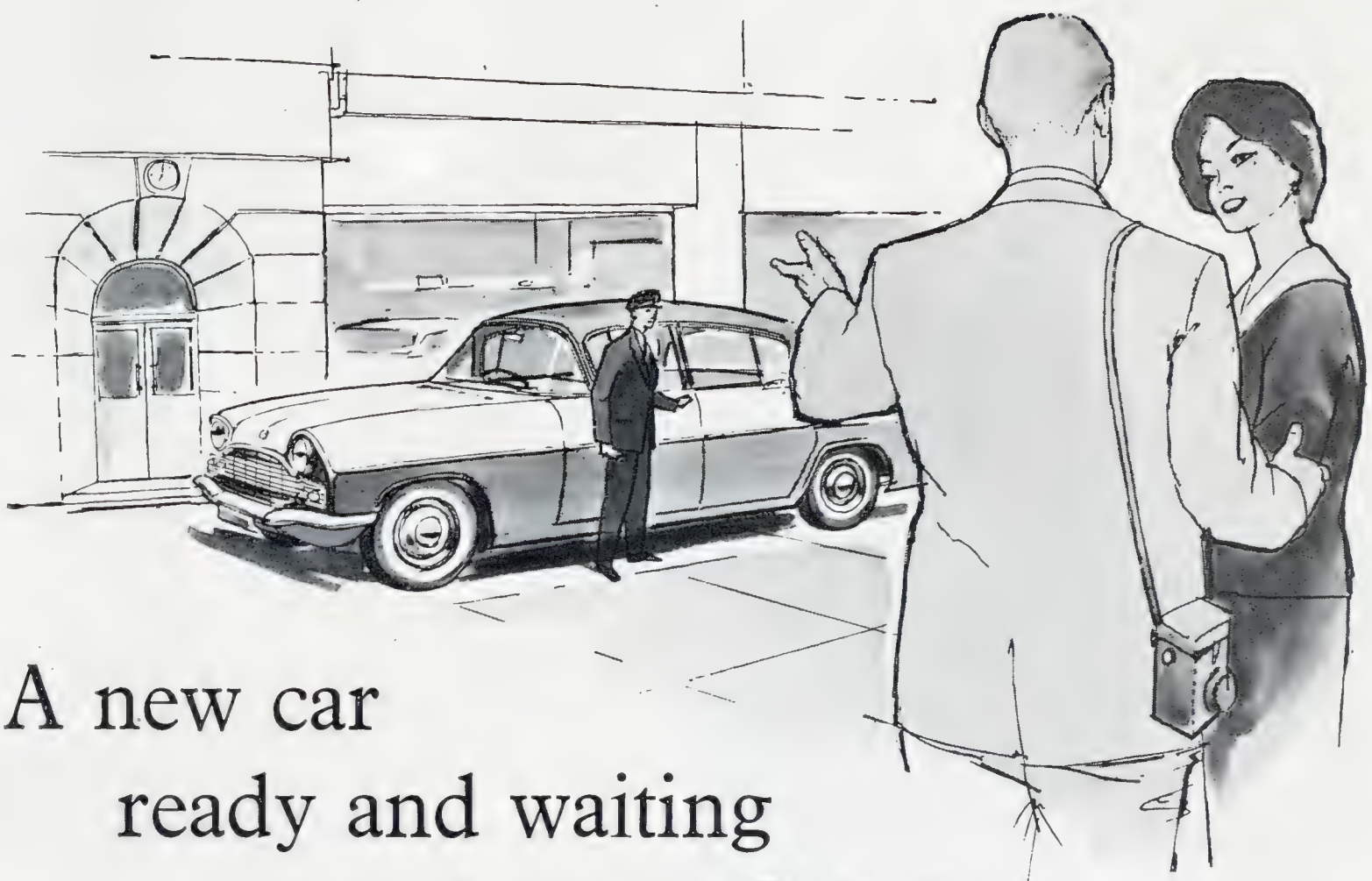

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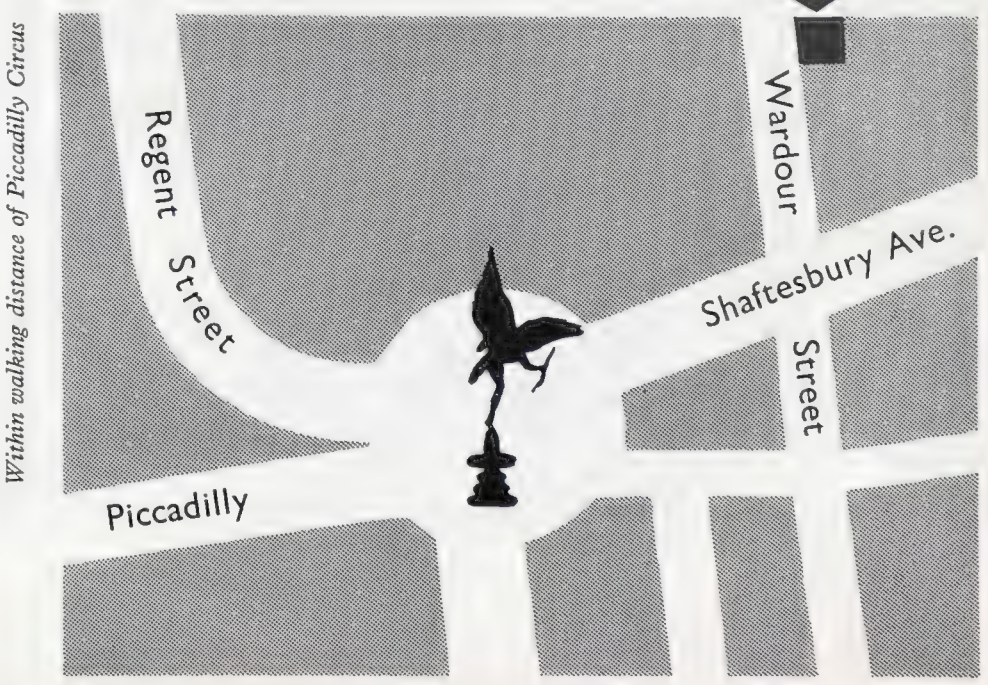

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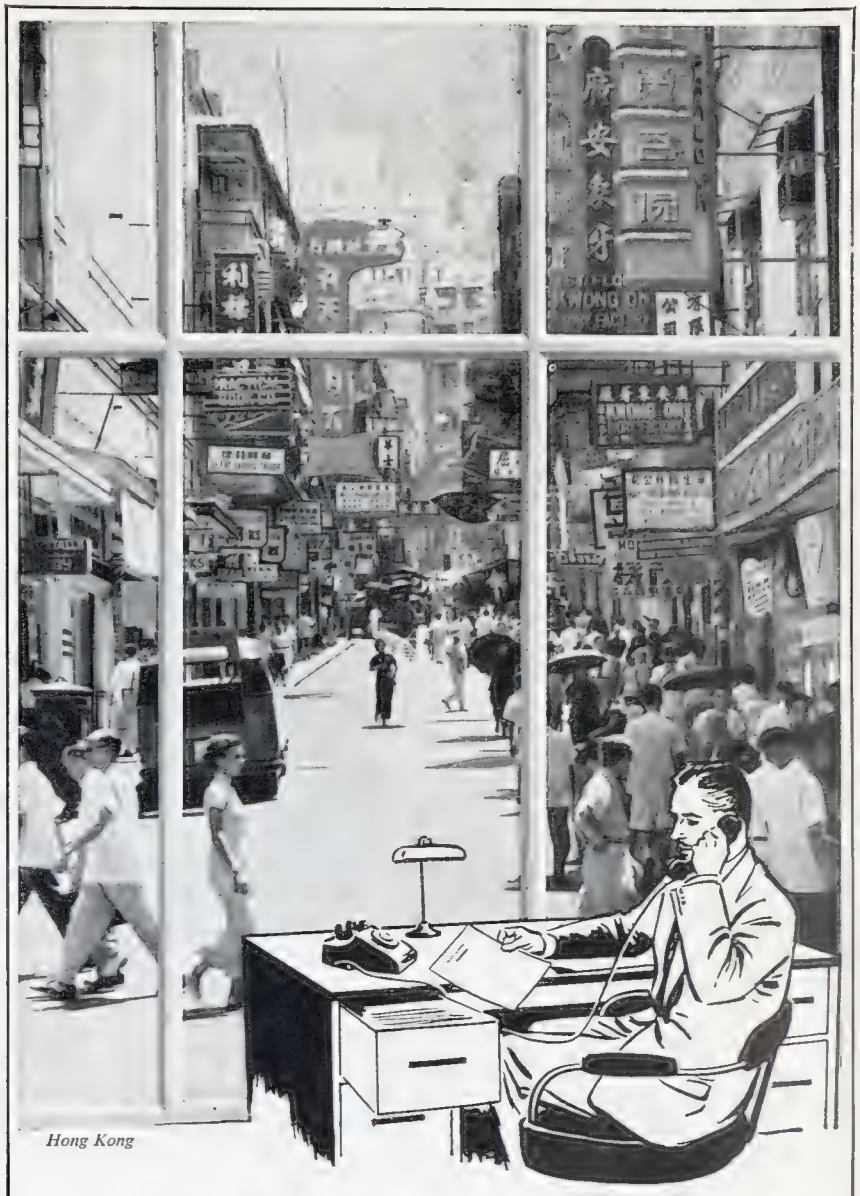

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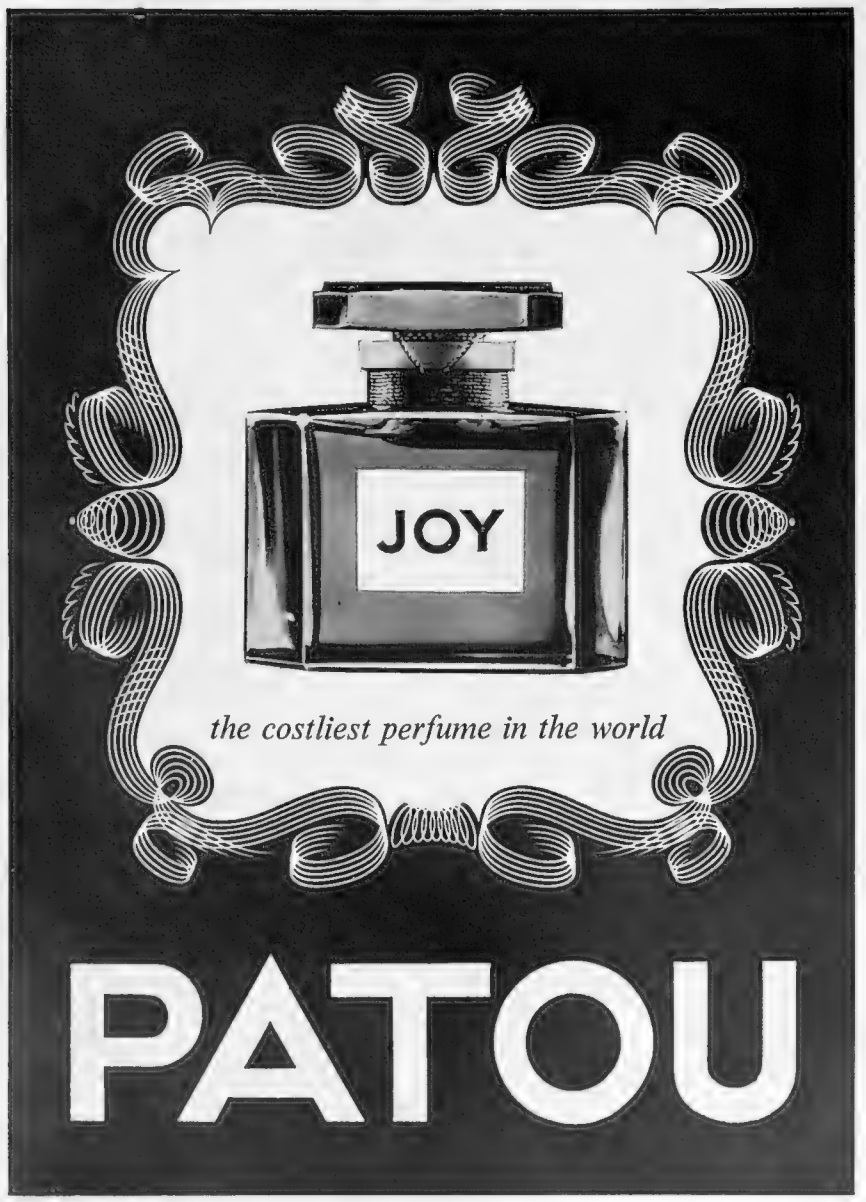

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A GIFT AT CHRISTMAS

Thinking of children at Christmas.—This is the season when children are particularly in our thoughts. In our homes, preparations are under way to celebrate the Festival with presents and parties. For more than seventy years the **Children's Society** (formerly Waifs and Strays) has been administering to the needs of less fortunate children some of them spastics, diabetics, and maladjusted. There are more than 4,500 children to care for and it costs about 30/- every minute to maintain this enormous family—and at Christmas the children will be looking for something extra. The society is supported almost entirely by voluntary contributions and now, because of greatly increased costs, it is burdened with a very formidable financial deficit. They cannot possibly turn away the many deserving children who come to them at the rate of four every day, and ask your help in their efforts to continue to feed the children, clothe, train and care for them. Their address is the Old Town Hall, Kennington, London, S.E.11.

Since 1866, when Dr. Barnardo opened his first home, more than 156,000 children have been cared for by this National Incorporated Association. Today, **Barnardo's** maintain 110 homes in Britain and five in Australia. There are nurseries, mixed homes, homes for backward children, five hospital homes for the physically handicapped, a technical training school and a sea training school for boys. In addition, many of the children cared for by the Association are boarded out with foster parents. At Barnardo's each child receives as happy a home life as possible with all material necessities, affection and care, as well as Christian training to enable them to become useful citizens. The head offices of Dr. Barnardo's Homes are in Stepney Causeway, London, E.1.

For more than 100 years the **Shaftesbury Homes and "Arethusa" Training Ship** have provided a happy home atmosphere, a sound education and every spiritual and material care for thousands of children. At Fortescue House, Twickenham, with its new dormitories, laboratories, and lecture rooms, the boys are given a sound education and trained for their future career; boys who have decided to make the sea their career receive their training in the *Arethusa*. Many boys have subsequently reached senior positions in both the Royal and Merchant Navies. At Esher House, East Molesey, the girls are given the same care and opportunities. After school years they are still cared for whether they start work or continue their education. The society is neither nationalised nor subsidised and depends largely on continued voluntary support. A Christmas gift would be welcomed at 164 Shaftesbury Avenue, London, W.C.2.

Seals for Christmas letters and parcels.—Each year, chest and heart illness is responsible for two out of every three deaths in Britain; it is also the cause of much disablement and distress. **The Chest and Heart Association** is confident, however, that success against diseases such as coronary thrombosis and chronic bronchitis is possible. By means of research, education and welfare they aim to achieve control of chest and heart maladies and to find their causes. But much wider research and education is needed and the Association has a number of new projects in view. The Association is an entirely voluntary organisation and in order to finance its activities it relies mainly on the sale of Christmas seals. This year the seals show two traditional Christmas scenes and they cost five shillings for a sheet of sixty. They can be obtained from The Chest and Heart Association at Tavistock House North, Tavistock Square, London, W.C.1.

A group of brave people.—The need for the **Royal Hospital and Home for Incurables** at Putney, is as great today as it was in 1854 when it was founded by Dr. Andrew Reed. The men and women who live at the home suffer from rheumatoid arthritis, Parkinson's disease, disseminated sclerosis and cardiac diseases and applications for admittance from all over Britain average twenty a month; but only about 18 can be admitted each year. Provision is made for nursing and medical services, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and radiography. With the help of willing attendants many of the patients are able to move about in wheel chairs; others are able to spend some time in the spacious grounds. The wards are small and each bed can be curtained off for privacy. The home is supported by voluntary contributions and a particular appeal for help is made at Christmas. Donations may be sent to the Home at West Hill, London, S.W.15.

Each year the **Distressed Gentlefolks Aid Association** helps more than 2,500 old and infirm people. In addition to assisting people in their own homes (thus making it possible for some of them to remain with their own relatives) they have established five nursing and two residential homes for the chronically sick and aged who have no one to care for them. The Association depends entirely on voluntary contributions and legacies to continue their work and, this Christmas, makes a special appeal for help. If it is forthcoming the sixty-three-year-old Association will be able to provide desperately needed grants, clothing and invalid foods as well as extra comforts to old and lonely people who have impaired health. The General Secretary of the D.G.A.A. is at Vicarage Gate House, London, W.8.

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those who cannot help themselves

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THEY ARE ENTIRELY DEPENDENT ON YOUR SUPPORT
PLEASE HELP TO MAKE 1961 A HAPPIER YEAR FOR THEM

DISTRESSED GENTLEFOLK'S AID ASSOCIATION

Patron: Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother

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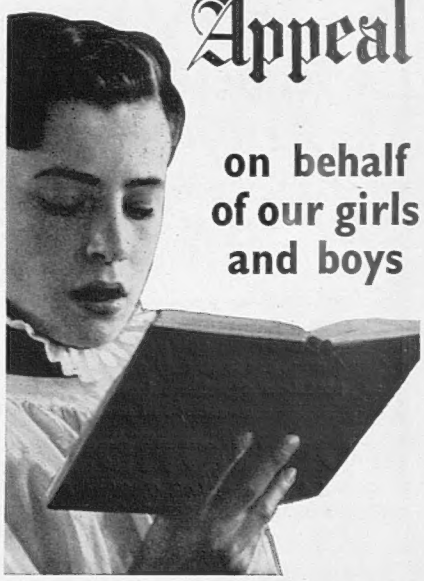
No, never again. Never again just down to the letter box. Nor even a few feet to open the window and listen to the Christmas bells. You see, she is incurable. She is one of the wonderful, happy people who live in the Royal Hospital and Home for Incurables at Putney—people who depend entirely *on your help*, your contribution, to live only in their hearts that happy life which you live on your own two feet. This Christmastide —as the children or grandchildren hang up their stockings—think to yourself just what *walking* means to you and yours. And send a present, however small, to this group of brave people at the Royal Hospital and Home for Incurables, Putney, London, S.W.15 — marking your envelope "Xmas." (It is not State-aided, and depends entirely on *your* contributions.)

A Christmas Appeal



on behalf of our girls and boys

They are a large family, over 800 of them being cared for, educated and trained in our homes at Twickenham and Esher, and on the 'Arethusa.' And the need for help continues, as we are neither Nationalised nor subsidised. So soon as we send them trained into the world others are waiting to take their places. Even in the Welfare State poverty, illness and misfortune claim their victims among the young and helpless. Could you possibly help us carry on this vital work.

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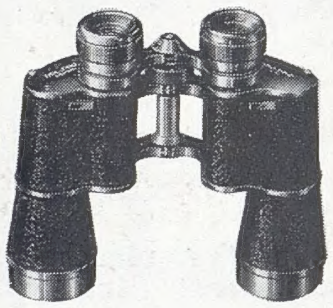

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